Appendices

Contents

A. Case context

A.1 Timeline

Table A1: Timeline of events, 2021 to 2022

Date(s)	Event
May 27, 2021	215 unmarked graves identified at former Kamloops Indian Residential School
May 30, 2021	Prime Minister Trudeau orders Canadian Flags to be flown at half-mast
June 21 to July 9, 2021	Over 15 Christian churches are targets of arson attacks by unknown vandals
June 24 to July 8, 2021	Unmarked graves announced at schools in Marieval (751), Cranbrook (182) and Kuper Island (160)
July 1, 2021	Canada Day celebrations cancelled or scaled back in several regions; counter-celebrations organized by Indigenous activists and allies
August 15 to September 20, 2021	The 44th Canadian federal election campaign results in the re-election of the incumbent Liberal government
September 30, 2021	Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is celebrated
January 25 to June 6, 2022	Additional unmarked grave sites identified at seven former residential schools
March 28 to April 1, 2022	Delegation of Indigenous leaders travel to the Vatican to request an official papal apology
July 24 to 30, 2022	Pope Francis visits Canada and apologizes for the Catholic Church's role in the residential school system

Table A2: List of unmarked grave announcements, 2021 to 2022

School	Date	Potential graves	Notes
Kamloops, BC	May 27, 2021	200	Initial announcement of 215 potential graves later revised to 200.
Brandon, MB	June 20, 2021	104	Searches were conducted in 2018 and 2019, but findings weren't widely covered until June 2021.
Marieval, SK	June 24, 2021	751	
Cranbrook, BC	June 30, 2021	182	
Kuper Island, BC	July 12, 2021	160+	
Williams Lake, BC	January 12, 2022	93	
Fort Pelly, SK	February 14, 2022	42	
St. Philip's, SK	February 14, 2022	12	
Grouard, AB	March 1, 2022	169	
Gordon's, SK	April 20, 2022	14	
Blue Quill's, AB	May 17, 2022	Unknown	Local band announced accidental discoveries of human remains believed to be unmarked graves of former residential school students.
Sandy Bay, MB	May 29, 2022	13	No announcement has been made, but the number of potential graves found is listed in media covering the ongoing searches at the school.
Fort Alexander, MB	June 6, 2022	190	

A.2 Correlates of beliefs in systemic racism

In Figure A1, I summarize the partial correlation between a variety of covariates and belief in systemic racism before the first unmarked graves were announced (see figure notes for model details). Overall, the model reveals several important patterns. First, partisanship is an important correlate of these beliefs: Conservatives report more than a half standard-deviation lower belief in systemic racism compared to Liberals, and even more compared to other left-wing parties. The size of this difference is comparable to the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on this issue.

The model also highlights that those who are older, earn more, are men, are distrustful of the media, and live in the West or Atlantic provinces or areas with a larger Indigenous population tend to believe less in the existence of systemic racism. Finally, while Catholics report lower belief in systemic racism than non-religious people, their attitudes are not significantly different from other Christians or followers of other religions. That being said, all of the differences described in this paragraph pale in comparison to the huge partisan gap on this question.

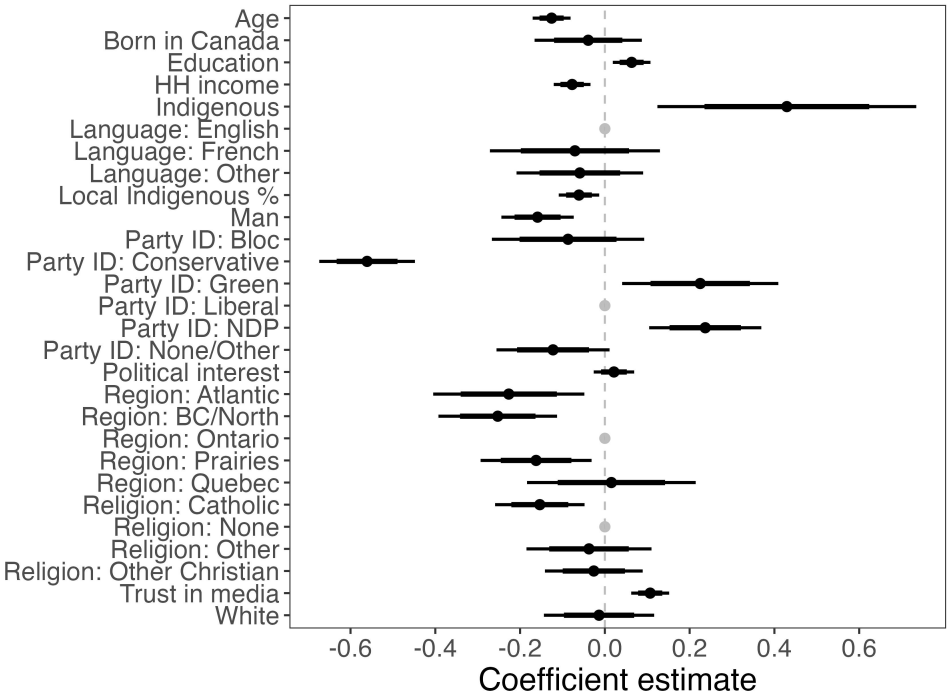


Figure A1: Correlates of belief in systemic racism

Using data from the 2020 and pre-announcement 2021 C-Dem Democracy Checkup surveys, this plot presents coefficient estimates from an OLS model regressing beliefs in systemic racism on the variables listed on the y-axis. Bars indicate standard HC2 95% and Bonferroni-adjusted 95% confidence intervals. The scale has been standardized so that estimates imply effects in terms of standard deviation changes, with higher values indicating stronger beliefs in the existence of systemic racism. All explanatory variables are binary except for Age, Education, Political Interest and HH income, which have been standardized such that the coefficient represents an implied effect of a one-standard deviation change. Reference categories for categorical variables are indicated by grey points. ($n = 4,835$).

A.3 Public mourning after the first announcement

After the first announcement of unmarked graves in Kamloops on May 27, 2021, Canadians across the country engaged in numerous public acts of mourning. Demonstrations, candle-light vigils, and remembrance walks saw hundreds of people attend in large cities, small towns and Indigenous communities. In many locales, children's shoes were assembled as a memorial to the lives that were lost at residential schools.

To illustrate the magnitude of this public outpouring of grief, I recorded every mention of an event commemorating the deaths of Indigenous children in Canadian cities that occurred in the two weeks after the Kamloops announcement. Figure A2 summarizes the data. Events

were not specific to one region and took place throughout the week as the news gradually became more widely known. In total, I identified almost 90 events in this period, although the true number is likely higher because not all events were described in the media or online.

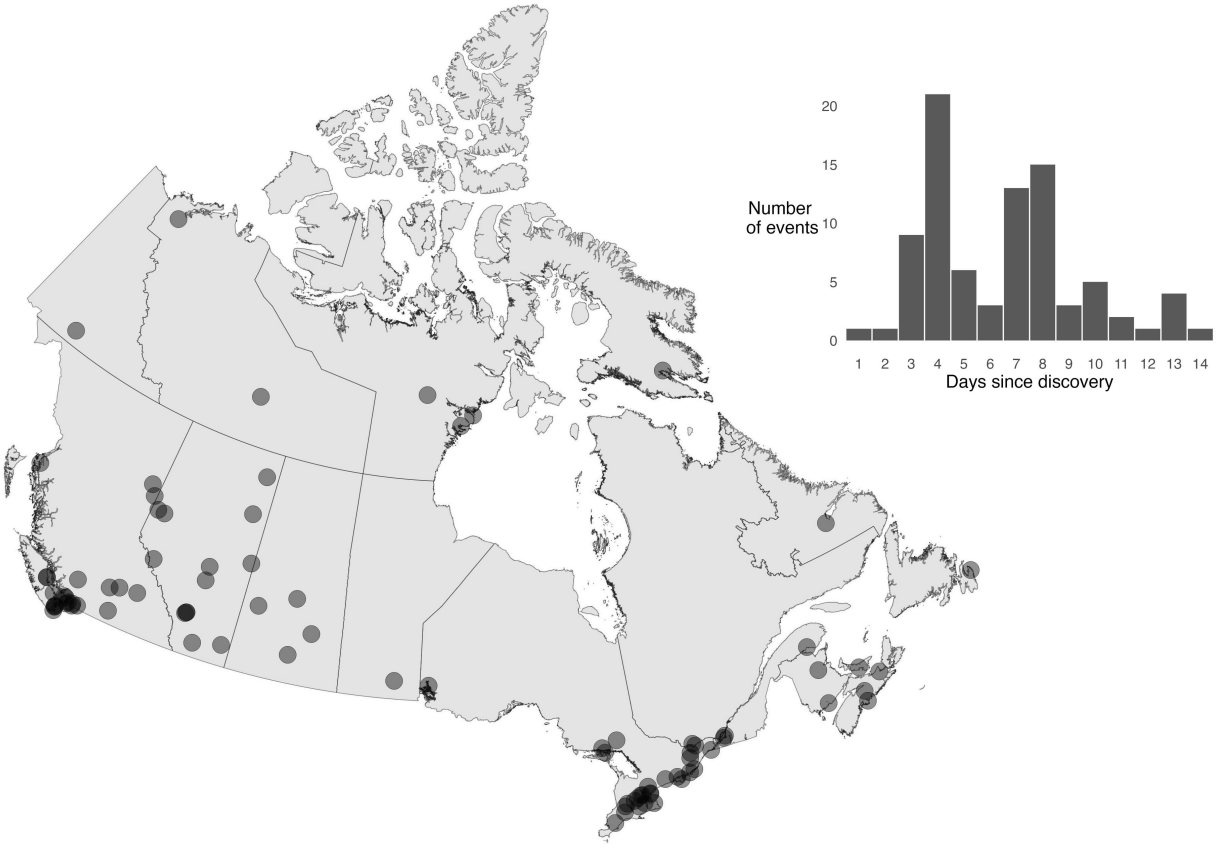


Figure A2: Location and frequency of vigils, May 28 to June 10

B. Quasi-experiment

B.1 Balance checks

The fundamental assumption in my analysis of public opinion after the first unmarked graves announcement is that those who were survey just before the announcement are similar on average to those surveyed immediately afterwards. To test this assumption, I first compare the means on a host of presumably stable covariates in Table A3. Overall, those in the pre- and post-announcement samples are remarkably similar on these observable dimensions, except those surveyed after the first announcement are about two years younger and have 0.4% fewer Indigenous people living in their electoral district.

I also conduct a separate check by regressing an indicator for being surveyed after the announcement on the same set of covariates to test whether the differences persist after conditioning on other possible sample differences. The standardized coefficient estimates predicting post-announcement status are summarized in Figure A3. The results in this test are qualitatively similar: few variables exhibit meaningful differences between the two samples. Only respondent age and the local Indigenous population percentage are statistically distinguishable from zero and even in those cases, the magnitudes are small: a one standard deviation increase in age and the local Indigenous percentage is associated with a 3 and 2 p.p. lower likelihood of being treated, respectively. The only other notably large coefficients are those associated with speaking French, living in Quebec and supporting the Bloc Québécois, but collinearity among these variables may be inflating the estimates given the balance reported in Table A3. Overall, these analyses suggest there are few discrepancies between the pre- and post-announcement samples and that they are small in size. Nonetheless, I control for all variables reported here in the ATE estimation.

Table A3: Sample characteristics by treatment status

	Average		
	Pre-announcement	Post-announcement	Difference
Man	0.50	0.47	0.03
Age	50.8	48.8	2.00*
White	0.80	0.79	0.01
Bachelor's degree	0.43	0.42	0.01
Household income	$79,474	$81,013	$1,539
Catholic	0.28	0.29	0.01
Other Christian	0.23	0.23	0.00
Not religious	0.39	0.38	0.01
Born in Canada	0.80	0.81	0.01
Political interest (0 to 10)	6.46	6.34	0.12
Region: Ontario	0.39	0.41	0.02
Region: Quebec	0.26	0.25	0.01
Region: BC	0.10	0.11	0.01
Region: Atlantic	0.06	0.07	0.01
Local Indigenous %	0.04	0.04	0.00*
French-speaker	0.24	0.25	0.01
Party ID: Bloc	0.07	0.09	0.02
Party ID: Conservative	0.23	0.23	0.00
Party ID: Liberal	0.33	0.32	0.01
Party ID: NDP	0.14	0.14	0.00
Party ID: None/Other	0.22	0.23	0.01

*$p<0.05$ in t-test for difference-in-means.

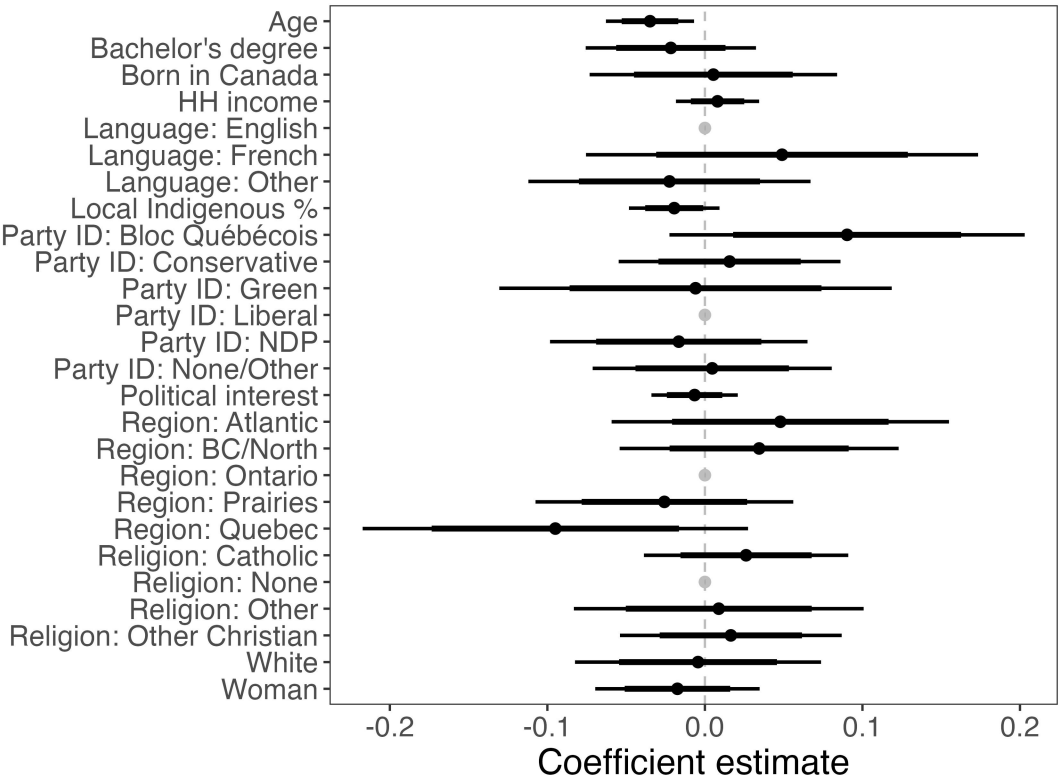


Figure A3: Quasi-experimental balance test

Plot presents coefficient estimates from an OLS model regressing treatment status on the variables listed on the y-axis. Bars indicate standard HC2 95% and Bonferroni-adjusted 95% confidence intervals. All variables are binary except for Age, Political Interest and HH income, which have been standardized such that the coefficient represents the implied effect of a one-standard deviation change. Reference categories for categorical variables are identified by grey points. ($n = 3,756$)

B.2 Belief in systemic racism by survey date

Figure A4 charts the average agreement with the two systemic racism items by survey date. After the initial announcement on May 27, agreement trends steadily upward as the story became more widely known.

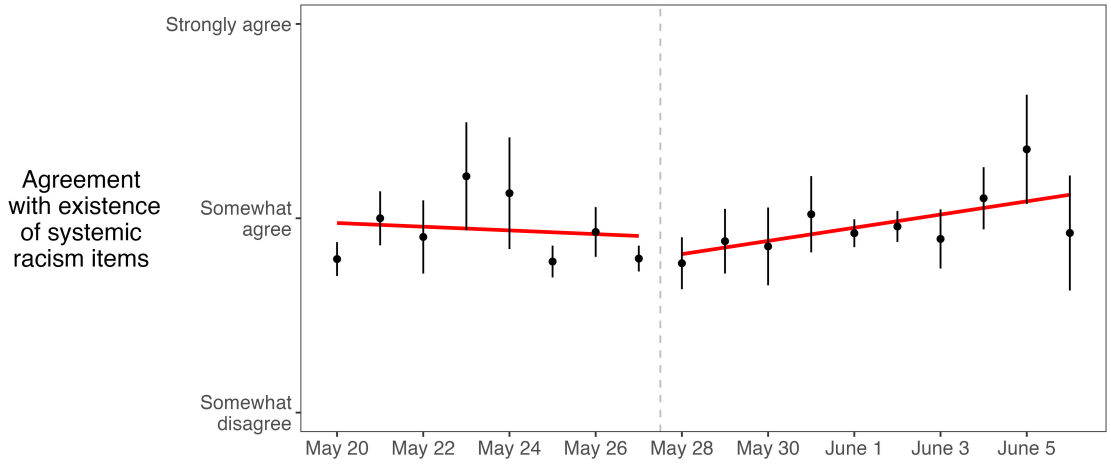


Figure A4: Agreement with systemic racism items by survey date

Plot presents mean and 95% confidence intervals for the average reported agreement with the existence of systemic racism among respondents each day the survey was in the field. Note: the final survey date on June 7 included 4 responses that were combined into the June 6 point in the plot for readability.

Partly this is because the news was first reported late on a Thursday on the west coast. Media did not begin covering the story intensely until after the weekend, mostly beginning on June 1 (see Appendix D.2). In Table A4, I re-estimate the models from the quasi-experiment using this date as the first true day of exposure to the story. Under this specification, the effects of being surveyed after the announcement became widely covered in the media are around 15 to 20% larger than the estimates reported in the main text.

Table A4: Effects of unmarked graves news using alternative exposure date

	Belief in systemic racism	
Surveyed after May 31	0.136*	0.116*
	(0.034)	(0.031)
Observations	3,849	3,752
Controls	No	Yes
R^2	0.004	0.196

Coefficients are expressed in terms of pre-announcement standard deviations. In model 2, the following covariates are included but not reported: gender, born in Canada, education, household income, party ID, political interest, religion, language, white, electoral district Indigenous percentage, province, and birth-decade fixed effects. *p<0.05

B.3 Effects on individual survey items

Table A5: Unmarked graves announcement and individual systemic racism items

	Belief in systemic racism			
	Colonialism item		Deservingness item	
Surveyed after graves announcement	0.105*	0.094*	0.104*	0.089*
	(0.032)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Observations	3,852	3,755	3,850	3,753
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.003	0.175	0.003	0.166

Coefficients are expressed in terms of pre-announcement standard deviations. In models 2 and 4, the following covariates are included but not reported: gender, born in Canada, education, household income, party ID, political interest, religion, language, white, electoral district Indigenous percentage, province, and birth-decade fixed effects. *p<0.05

C. Over-time analyses

C.1 Sample details

In investigating attitudinal persistence, I rely on responses to the Indigenous resentment items in the 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 C-Dem Democracy Checkup surveys and the 2021 Canadian Election Study (n=4,877; 7,986; 3,853; 7,444; 7,712; and 18,374, respectively). The sampling strategy is nearly identical in all four surveys, relying on online recruitment and quotas for age, gender, province and language (in Quebec), based on the 2016 and 2021 Canadian censuses. In the 2021 CES, the data includes "oversampled" responses that collected overflow responses from full quotas and in the 2022 Democracy Checkup, an oversample of Quebec respondents was conducted; I exclude both sets of oversample responses in my analyses. Respondents needed to be 18 years of age or older, and Canadian citizens or permanent residents to participate. In all analyses, responses are unweighted.

One noteworthy change in sampling is that for the 2019 and 2020 surveys, C-Dem contracted with Dynata to recruit respondents, while Leger is used from 2021 onwards. The overall level of belief in systemic racism is lower in the Dynata samples, although this is confounded by time. Importantly, the main pattern of interest − a short-term decrease in resentment in the 2021 Democracy Checkup followed by an increase in the resentment months later in the 2021 CES − is observable strictly within the surveys fielded by Leger. These facts help ameliorate any concerns that the over time trends I observe are due to changes in sample characteristics, although I investigate this possibility in more detail below.

C.2 Changes in sample composition over time

One explanation for the changes we observe in beliefs about systemic racism over the last few years − and in particular the reversion in attitudes after the unmarked graves announcements in 2021 − is that the samples of respondents are changing rather than just their reported attitudes. However, the survey is a general omnibus political attitudes poll, not one focused

exclusively on intergroup attitudes, so it unlikely that there would be response bias specifically on this issue after the unmarked graves announcements. Nonetheless, to evaluate the extent of changing sample characteristics, I estimate a multinomial logistic regression where the outcome is a categorical variable indicating the survey wave a respondent belongs to and the predictor variables are demographic characteristics. If there are no differences in respondent characteristics across survey waves, the variables should not predict the survey that each respondent comes from. Note that in the Summer 2019 survey, there is no question that identified respondents' race, so this survey is not used in the analyses here. As the plot in the main text showed, however, there was little change in respondents' attitudes between 2019 and 2020.

Table A6 summarizes the model; note that the reference category for the outcome variable is the May 2021 (the field dates of which included the first unmarked graves announcement). The coefficient estimates represent the change in log odds of appearing in the survey in the columns relative to the May 2021 survey given a unit change in the predictor variables while all other predictors are held constant. The model reveals some notable changes between survey waves: for example, respondents generally became older over each successive wave and, relative to those in the May 2021 survey, those in later surveys were more likely to be born in Canada, have higher incomes, and less likely to be white.

Given these relevant differences in sample characteristics, I attempt to control for all changes over time in respondents' observable characteristics. Specifically, I estimate an OLS model predicting systemic racism beliefs across all survey waves (except 2019; see above) based on the variables in Table A6 and then summarize the model residuals across each survey. Figure A5 presents the results. This plot captures the average belief in systemic racism in each survey after partialing out observable variables. Note that larger residuals indicate a greater belief in systemic racism than would have been predicted by all of the time-invariant pre-treatment covariates. Encouragingly, the plot shows the same pattern as the raw scores in the main analysis: belief in systemic racism becomes stronger after the

Table A6: Predicting sample membership from respondent characteristics

	Survey wave (Reference category is May 2021)			
	May 2020	September 2021	May 2022	May 2023
Age	−0.086*	0.207*	0.064	0.110*
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Man	0.085	−0.086	−0.068	−0.065
	(0.044)	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Born in Canada	0.074	0.761*	0.200*	0.099
	(0.063)	(0.057)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Region: BC/North	0.273	−0.012	0.289	0.253
	(0.103)	(0.093)	(0.101)	(0.100)
Region: Ontario	0.003	−0.210	0.038	−0.010
	(0.089)	(0.080)	(0.088)	(0.087)
Region: Prairies	−0.010	−0.019	0.069	0.001
	(0.098)	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.096)
Region: Quebec	−0.254	0.084	−0.186	−0.106
	(0.121)	(0.106)	(0.119)	(0.118)
Religion: None	−0.101	0.117	0.175*	0.264*
	(0.054)	(0.048)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Religion: Other	−0.022	0.055	0.091	0.275*
	(0.081)	(0.073)	(0.079)	(0.078)
Religion: Other Christian	−0.068	−0.012	−0.062	−0.025
	(0.063)	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Party ID: Conservative	0.102	0.044	0.189	0.034
	(0.099)	(0.086)	(0.098)	(0.096)
Party ID: Green	0.061	−0.461*	−0.191	−0.304
	(0.128)	(0.117)	(0.131)	(0.129)
Party ID: Liberal	0.035	−0.077	0.005	−0.169
	(0.094)	(0.081)	(0.093)	(0.091)
Party ID: NDP	−0.168	0.153	0.304	0.138
	(0.106)	(0.091)	(0.102)	(0.101)
Party ID: None/Other	−0.211	−0.370*	0.260	0.128
	(0.103)	(0.089)	(0.099)	(0.097)
Household income	0.007	0.068*	0.084*	0.120*
	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Local Indigenous %	0.015	0.036	0.020	0.009
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Education	−0.047	0.045	−0.026	−0.054
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Political interest	0.071*	0.006	−0.023	−0.047
	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
White	0.078	−0.166	−0.202*	−0.186*
	(0.062)	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.059)
Language: French	0.119	0.117	0.214	0.084
	(0.098)	(0.086)	(0.096)	(0.096)
Language: Other/Multiple	−0.080	1.212*	−0.053	−0.212
	(0.074)	(0.063)	(0.071)	(0.072)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	118,302.200			

*Bonferroni-adjusted p<0.05

initial unmarked graves announcements (marked by a dashed vertical line), but return to baseline levels in the later surveys. These results suggest that the reversion in attitudes is not driven simply by a change in sample characteristics over time.

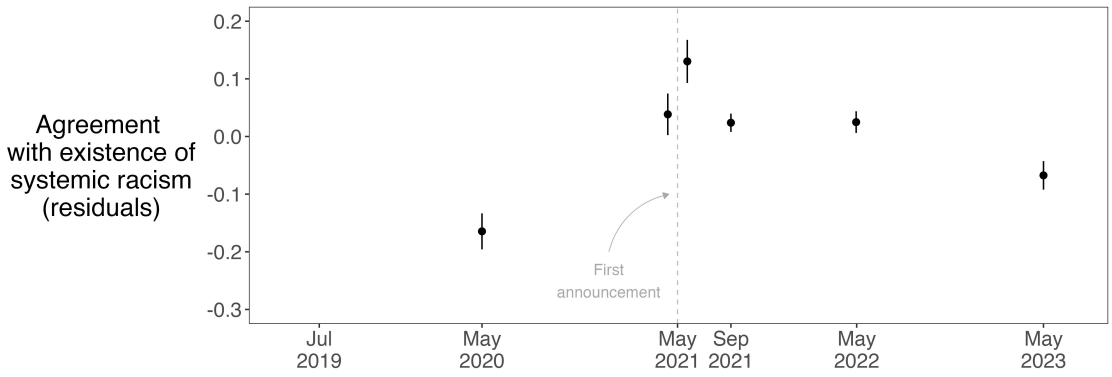


Figure A5: Residualized beliefs in systemic racism, 2019 to 2023

Plot presents average and 95% confidence intervals for respondents' residualized systemic racism scores in each survey wave. Residuals calculated from an OLS model including the following predictors: age, gender, white, born in Canada, region, religion, party ID, household income, language, education and political interest. The vertical dashed line indicates the initial announcement of unmarked graves in 2021.

C.3 Systemic racism items separately over time

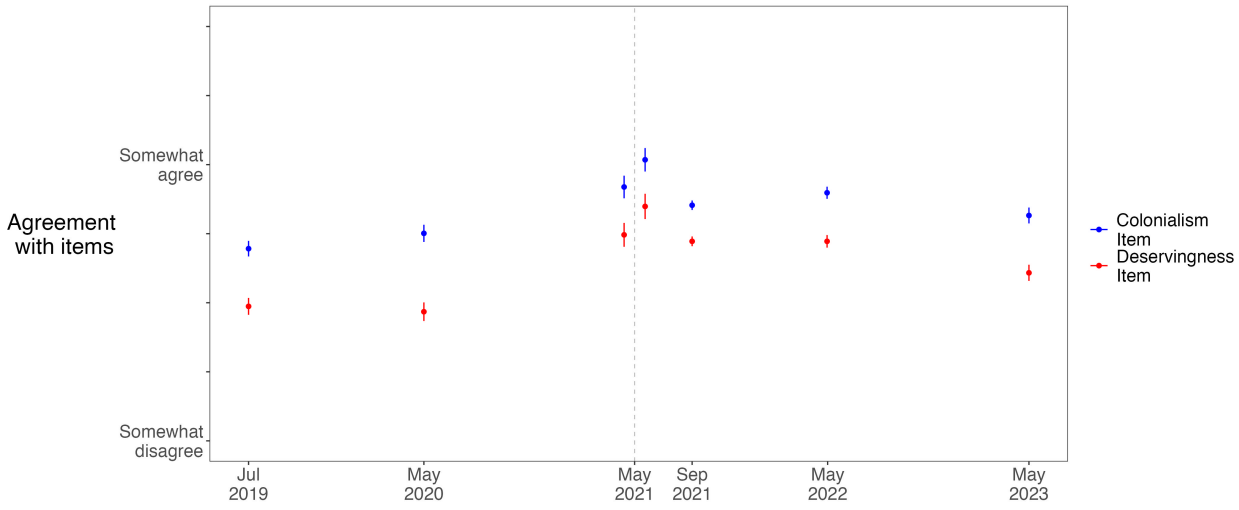


Figure A6: Beliefs in systemic racism, 2019 to 2023

Plot presents average and 95% confidence intervals for the mean for each of the two items measuring beliefs in systemic racism. In all but the September 2021 survey, this question was asked on a four-point Likert scale. For that specific survey, a five-point scale was used, but responses have been rescaled to match the four-point scale (see Appendix Figure A7 for individual response level prevalence over time).

C.4 Response-level frequency over time

The over time comparisons in the main text rely on five different surveys. In all but one of those surveys, the items asking about agreement with the existence of systemic racism are measured on a four-point scale. In the main text, responses from the only survey using a five-point scale (the September 2021 survey) are rescaled to match the other years' data.

In Figure A7, I show that the same substantive conclusions can still be drawn without re-scaling the data. The two plots present that proportion of respondents answering with each response level to each systemic racism item in each survey wave. When the grave announcement was first made (indicated by the gray dashed line), all response categories became less prevalent except for the one that indicated strong agreement with the existence of systemic racism. In the September 2021 survey, we again see nearly all response categories becoming less prevalent, but this time because a "neutral" option has been introduced. That being said, more respondents sorted out of the "strongly agree" option than the "strongly disagree" option between the two 2021 waves, indicating a reversion in attitudes. Finally, when the "neutral" option is again removed in 2022, we do not see many respondents returning to a "strongly agree" position, suggesting possibly that attitudes stabilized after 2021.

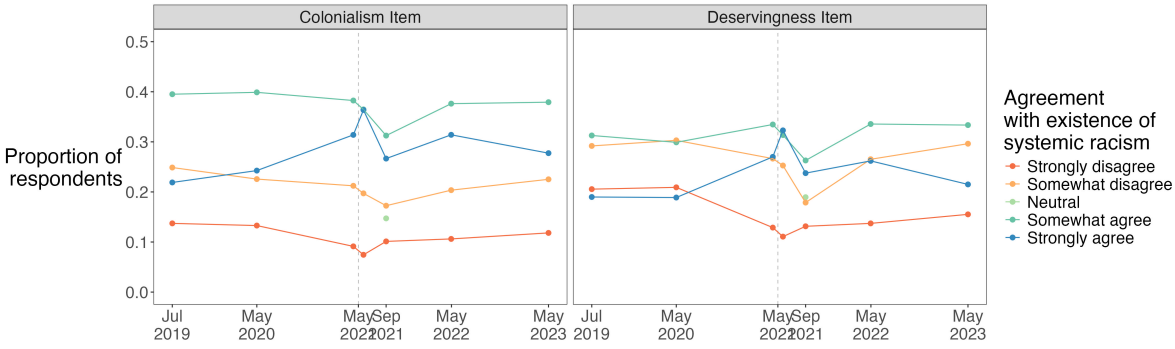


Figure A7: Beliefs in systemic racism by response level, 2019 to 2023

Plot presents the proportion of respondents offering each response level to the two systemic racism items in each survey wave. The colour scale has been defined so that higher values indicate greater agreement with the existence of systemic racism. Except for the September 2021 survey, these items was asked on a four-point Likert scale.

C.5 Indigenous feeling thermometer over time

The main analyses in this study focus on beliefs in systemic racism. In Figure A8 I instead look at a measure of affective attitudes toward Indigenous people over time: non-Indigenous people's average responses when asked to rate how they feel about Indigenous peoples on a scale from 0 to 100, with larger values indicating more positive views. While this plot only allows for a descriptive look at attitudes over time, one pattern worth noting is that the average score in 2021 after the grave announcements does not appear to be much different than responses among online respondents since 2015. There is no increase in favourable attitudes as a result of the revelation of historical injustices, further corroborating the main analyses' finding of little long-term attitudinal change.

This data also reveals an important mode effect. In 2015, the Canadian Election Study was fielded both online and over the phone. Those completing the survey online rated Indigenous peoples nearly 11 points lower on the feeling thermometer than those who spoke to an enumerator over the phone ($p < 0.001$). These results suggest that online surveying may be significantly reducing respondent incentives to provide socially desirable responses (see Breton et al. 2017).

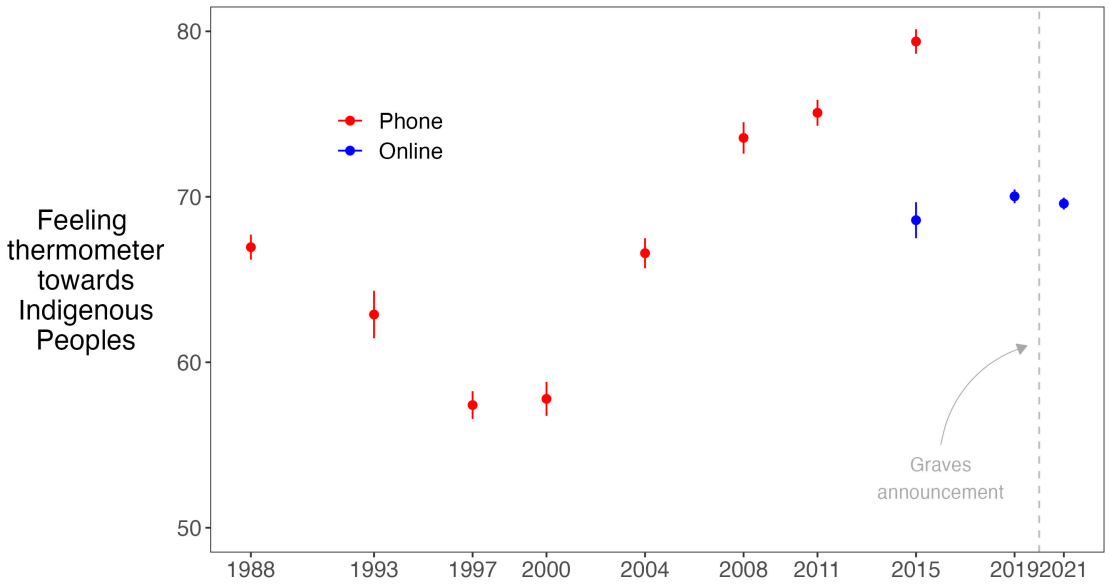


Figure A8: Feeling thermometer toward Indigenous peoples, 1988 to 2021

Plot presents the average and 95% confidence intervals for the feeling thermometer score in each survey year. The specific language of the item changed over time: respondents gave their feelings towards "Native peoples" in 1988, "Aboriginal peoples" from 1993 to 2015, and "Indigenous peoples" from 2019 onwards. In 2019, point represents the pooled average within two surveys: the Canadian Election Study and the Democracy Checkup.

C.6 Racial minorities feeling thermometer over time

In the main text, I discuss the murder of George Floyd in the United States and the subsequent protests that occurred both in that country and in Canada as one possible explanation for the increase in respondents' willingness to acknowledge anti-Indigenous systemic racism in the period *before* the graves were identified. To shed light on this possibility, I report on changes in non-Indigenous Canadians' attitudes toward "racial minorities" using a feeling thermometer score in Figure A9. (This figure complements the analyses in **??**, which investigates the graves announcement's effects on this same variable).

Paralleling the main text findings with regard to beliefs in systemic racism (see Figure 3), there is a simultaneous improvement in attitudes toward racial minorities between May 2020 (just before George Floyd's murder) and May 2021, before the first announcement. Feeling thermometer scores improve by 5.1% between these dates, while acknowledgement

of anti-Indigenous systemic racism increases by 8.6%. Of course, we should be cautious in drawing conclusions from this analysis because the feeling thermometer is measuring a different underlying concept, and not a different racial group. For this reason, I cannot rule out alternative explanations for the change in pre-treatment attitudes, but given the lack of a trend in systemic racism beliefs between the summer 2019 and May 2020 surveys, George Floyd's murder seems like a plausible explanation.

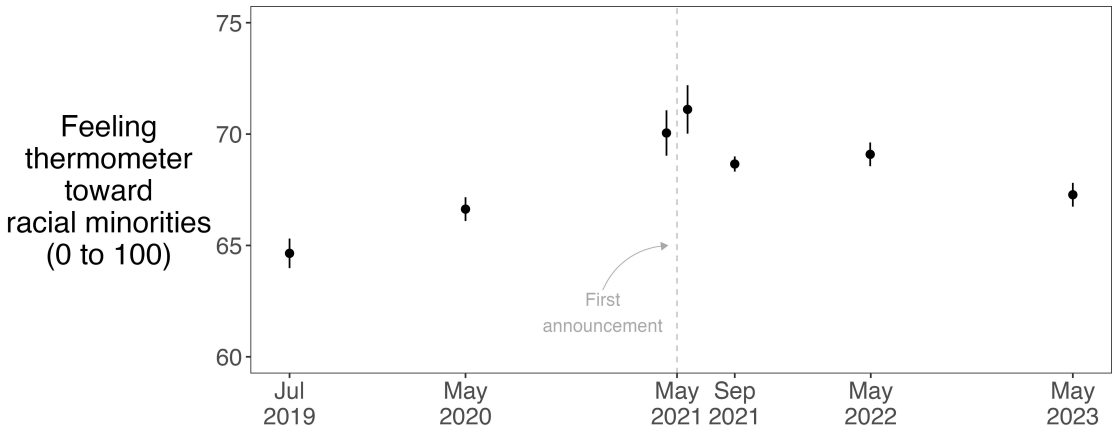


Figure A9: Feeling thermometer toward racial minorities, 2019 to 2023

Plot presents average and 95% confidence intervals for the feeling thermometer score reported by respondents towards racial minorities. The vertical dashed line indicates the initial announcement of unmarked graves in 2021.

C.7 Public prioritization of Indigenous issues over time

The main analysis in this paper looks at changes in beliefs about systemic racism. Yet the public's interest in Indigenous policy issues exhibited a similar pattern over time. I collated data from the Angus Reid Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan research foundation, on the percentage of respondents listing "Indigenous issues" or "reconciliation" among the top three policy issues they care about most when asked in repeated cross-sectional surveys from the past three years.

As Figure A10 shows, around 10% of Canadians provided this response in the months just before the first announcement in May 2021. Immediately after the unmarked grave

announcements, this proportion more than doubled. Attention to Indigenous issues had not been as high since early 2020, when Indigenous communities protested against the construction of a natural gas pipeline in British Columbia. In that case, however, interest in Indigenous issues was less related to historical injustices than to conflicts over land rights and resource development.

Since the policy interest variable can reflect a diversity of viewpoints toward Indigenous peoples, it cannot be used to infer opinion change. However, Angus Reid conducts polls as a higher frequency than the surveys used in the main analysis, so it is useful to examine how attention changed over the study period. After the initial increase in prioritization of Indigenous issues, interest returned to baseline levels within a year and, over the following months, trended even further downward. These findings are generally similar to the results for beliefs in systemic racism. And as with that outcome, the changes are similar across partisan groups: despite significant pre-announcement differences in the importance that supporters of different parties attached to Indigenous issues, the interest levels of each group increased only temporarily before quickly decaying in the months after the announcements.

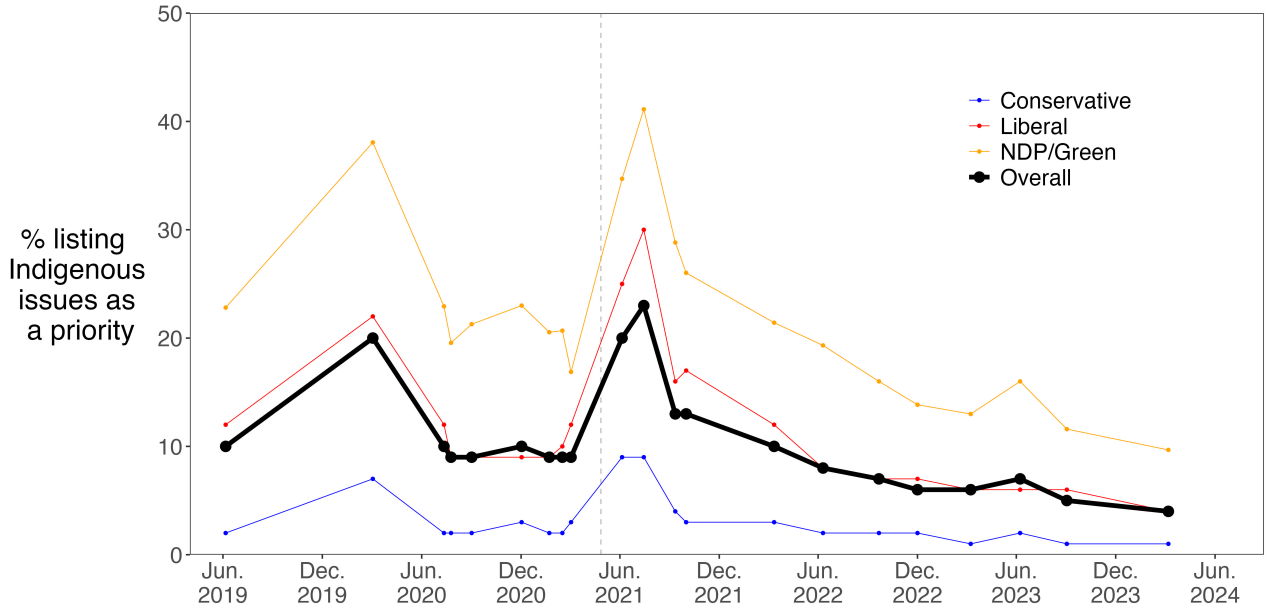


Figure A10: Public attention to Indigenous issues, 2019 to 2023

Data are from Angus Reid Institute public opinion polls; the y-axis indicates the percentage of respondents, by party and overall, that selected "Indigenous issues" as one of their top-three choices when responding to the question "Thinking of the various issues facing Canada today, which ones do you personally care about the most?"

D. Media analysis

D.1 Data sources

The media content analysis in this study is based on all articles published in Canada's six largest English-language newspapers and three major regional newspapers between January 1 and December 31, 2021. The estimated political slant of each outlet is presented in Figure A11, according to data from Media Bias/Fact Check.

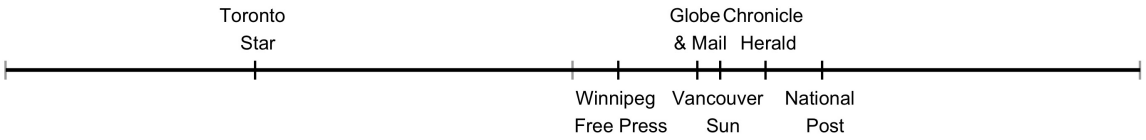


Figure A11: Media source biases

The article data were downloaded as a document-frequency matrix from ProQuest's database, which does not carry French-language Canadian newspapers.

The following pre-processing steps were carried out before estimating topic models:

1. Terms were tokenized into unigrams and converted to lowercase.
2. Stop-words, punctuation, numbers and terms appearing in less than 1% of articles were removed.
3. Articles shorter than 100 words were removed.
4. Duplicate articles were removed in two ways:
   (a) Duplicate stories appearing in the same outlet on the same date with the same title were removed.
   (b) A cosine distance matrix was calculated measuring the similarity between each article in the dataset with all other articles. If articles had a cosine similarity score greater than 0.9, a random article among the similar articles was chosen to remain in the dataset and others were removed. This step is necessary because several of the outlets share the same parent company and publish syndicated articles.

After these steps, the corpus comprised 81,544 articles.

D.2 Residential school topic prevalence during quasi-experiment

Figure A12 presents the proportion of newspaper coverage related to the residential schools topic by survey date during the quasi-experiment. After the initial announcement of suspected unmarked graves was made late in the day on Thursday May 27, coverage steadily increased over the weekend before jumping on June 1. In Appendix B.2 I re-estimate my main models using this alternative date as the onset of exposure to the residential schools information. Note that none of the stories appearing before May 27 are related to the unmarked graves.

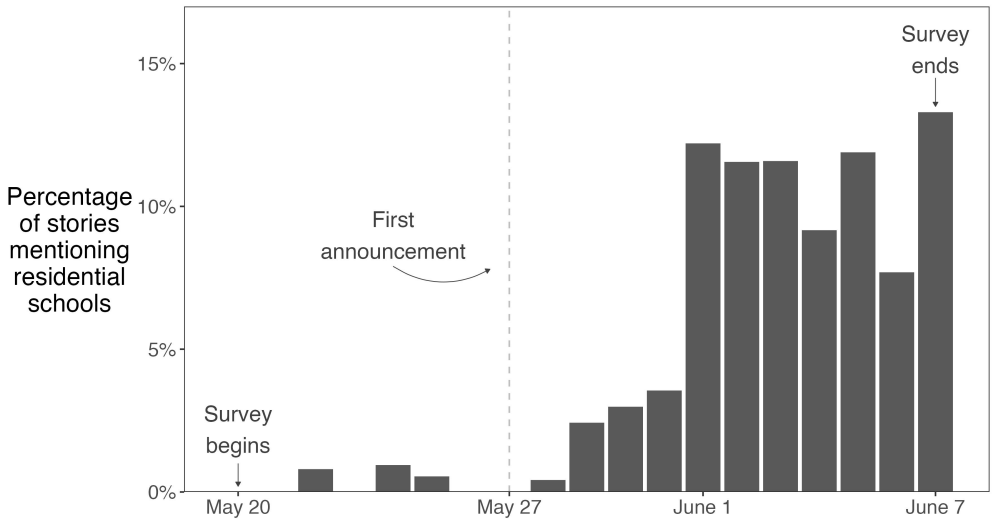


Figure A12: Prevalence of residential school topic during quasi-experiment survey dates

Plot presents the proportion of news stories in six of Canada's largest English-language newspapers that contain the term "residential school(s)" during the May 2021 survey.

D.3 Topic modelling media coverage

As an alternative to the analysis based on term frequency in the main text, I train a Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic model. The model is estimated for 250 topics, which is based on its ability to consistenyl identify a "residential schools" topic that is distinct from a more general Indigenous topic. (Figure A13 plots the terms most associated with the residential school topic, alongside the general Indigenous topic for comparison.)

Figure A14 summarizes the prevalence of the residential school topic over the course of 2021. The patterns over time are broadly consistent with the main results using term frequency.

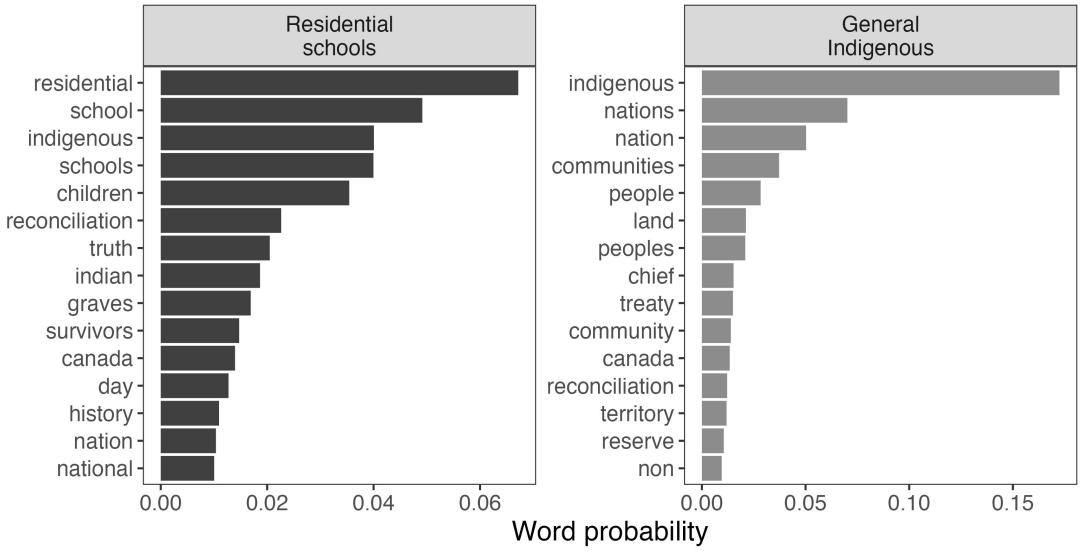


Figure A13: Terms most associated with Indigenous topics in LDA model estimates

Plot presents the fifteen terms that are most associated with the residential schools and general Indigenous topics in the LDA model along with their word probabilities for those topics.

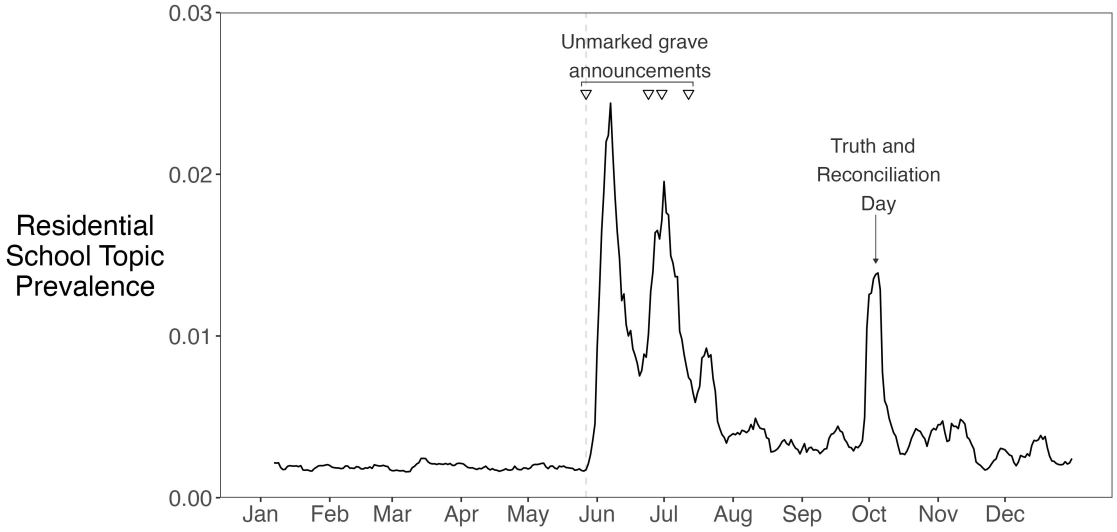


Figure A14: Prevalence of residential school topic in Canadian newspapers, 2021

Plot presents a 7-day rolling average of the residential schools topic prevalence estimated from an LDA topic model on the full-text of every news story in six of Canada's largest English-language newspapers.

D.4 Residential schools and unmarked graves media coverage, 2000 to 2022

In the main text, I focus on the prevalence of coverage related to residential schools during 2021. To look at a longer time horizon, I assembled a separate corpus of every article published in Canada's three largest English-language newspapers between 2000 and 2022.

Figure A15 charts the percentage of news stories each month that mention the phrase "residential school(s)." The plot reveals that Canadians were exposed to the residential school history more intensely after the unmarked grave announcements than at any point in the previous two decades. While coverage increased after the TRC issued its final report in 2015, no other period comes close to the volume of articles referencing this history in the summer of 2021.

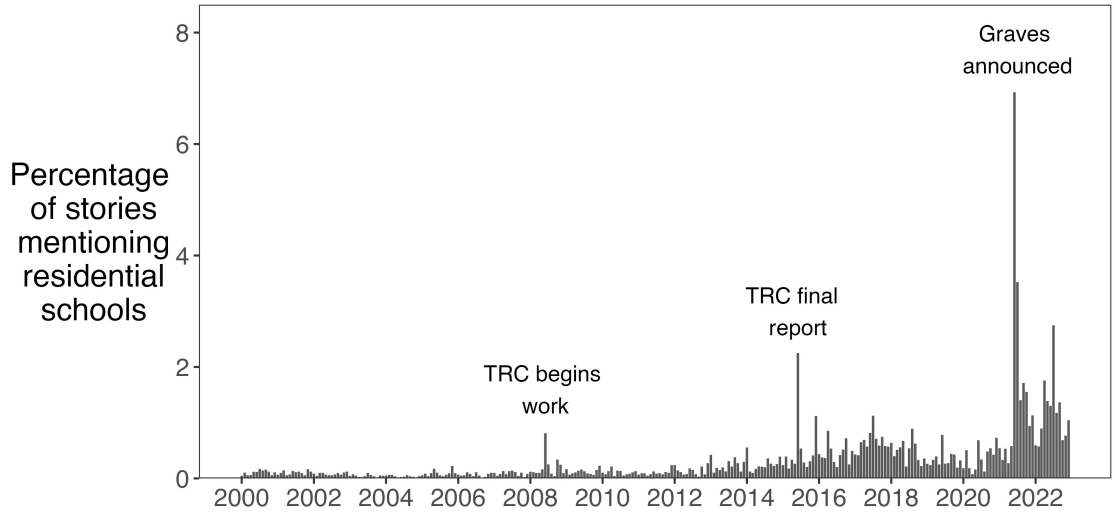


Figure A15: Percentage of newspaper stories mentioning residential schools, 2000 to 2022

Plot presents the percentage of all new stories that mention "residential school(s)" in the *Globe and Mail, National Post* and *Toronto Star* by month.

That being said, Figure A15 does show that the residential school history was covered to some degree before the events of 2021. However, the news about unmarked graves represented an entirely new dimension to the story, of which most Canadians were unaware. While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission signalled that graves likely existed at former schools and recommended further action to identify and protect these sites (i.e. Calls

to Action 73 to 76), this information did not appear much in the media before 2021. In Figure A16, I count the number of articles each year that include the words "graves" and "residential school(s)" together in Canada's largest English-language newspapers. Before 2021, there were essentially no articles discussing this topic, while that number increases dramatically after the Kamloops announcement. Moreover, many of the grave-related residential school articles before 2021 are likely false positives. I hand-coded 20 of the pre-2021 articles mentioning these two terms together and only three of them actually had to do with burials at the schools, while many were accidentally flagged because of phrases like "grave doubts."

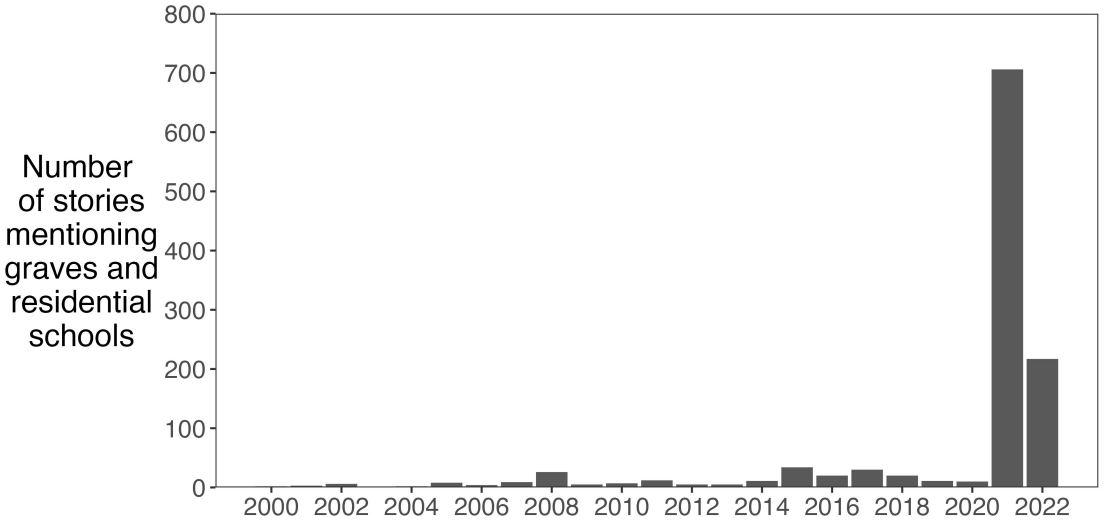


Figure A16: Number of articles mentioning "graves" and "residential schools," 2000 to 2022

Plot presents the number of all new stories that mention "residential school(s)" and "grave(s)" in the *Globe and Mail, National Post* and *Toronto Star* by year.

To conduct my analysis of how the media framed the residential schools topic, I need to first identify the articles that are related to this topic. I relied on two-step classification process. First, I selected all articles containing the word "Indigenous" and appearing in the six largest English-language newspapers between the first announcement of unmarked graves in May 2021 and the end of the second survey in October. Within this set, I then read each article title and text to determine whether it was related to residential schools based on

whether it was primarily concerned with:

- The history or legacies of residential schools
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Reconciliation for the residential school system
- Personal experiences in the schools
- Residential school denialism
- Policy and symbolic responses to the residential schools issue
- Church responses to the residential schools issue
- Non-indigenous reactions to the residential school history

If an article covered one of the above topics, I used it in the framing analysis. I did not flag articles as related to residential schools if they were about (i) Indigenous topics not directly related to residential schools, (ii) discrimination and racism against Indigenous people in general, or (iii) Indigenous leaders, community members or community initiatives unrelated to residential schools.

Initially filtering articles based on the appearance of the "Indigenous" term resulted in fewer false negatives than more restrictive decision rules (e.g. only selecting articles containing *both* "Indigenous" and "residential") and machine learning algorithms. To illustrate the performance of this decision rule, I hand-coded 850 articles that both included and excluded the term "Indigenous" based on whether they related to the residential schools topic. While only 29% of the articles containing the word "Indigenous" were actually related to residential schools, none of the articles that did not mention this word were related to residential schools. In short, this decision rule casts a very wide net, identifying a number of articles that will not ultimately be used in the framing analysis, but it ensures that I have truly located all articles relevant to the topic of interest.

In total, 628 articles were related to residential schools and used in the framing analysis.

D.5 Novelty in residential schools coverage

Novelty measure (Aral and Dhillon 2023; Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral 2018) – measures the distance of topic distributions between two documents using cosine similarity:

The novelty score for each article is given by:

$$\text{Novelty}_i = 1 - \frac{1}{n_j} \sum_j cos(\Gamma_i, \Gamma_j)$$

where n_j is the number of articles appearing in the period preceding article i, γ_i and γ_j are topic distributions for article i and article j in the preceding period, and cos is the cosine similarity function $cos(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{B}) = \frac{\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B}}{||\mathbf{A}||||\mathbf{B}||}$. The summation occurs over all documents j in the preceding period. Higher values of Novelty_i indicate that article i is more novel relative to the preceding period.

E. Canada's First National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On September 30, 2021, Canada held its first ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR), a federal statutory holiday that was signed into law shortly after the first unmarked graves announcement. Coincidentally, the survey dates of the Canadian Election Study overlapped with this date and, as in the main text, I compare those surveyed just before the NDTR against those surveyed just after in terms of their beliefs in systemic racism. Since the NDTR triggered a renewed attention to the history of residential schools (see Figure **??** below), this comparison seeks to descriptively capture the how an increase in the salience and social desirability of the same issues correlated with the main outcomes in a naturalistic setting. Of course, the timing of the NDTR was pre-determined and so the treatment here is not strictly exogenous (media coverage, for example, was increasing in the days leading up to the NDTR).

E.1 Balance checks

While a comparison between those surveyed just before and just after NDTR is not perfectly identified because the date of treatment exposure was not exogenous, it is nonetheless useful to check whether the two sets of respondents are similar in terms of their pre-treatment characteristics. To do so, I first compare the means on a host of presumably stable covariates in Table A7. Those in the pre- and post-NDTR samples are similar on most observable dimensions and many of the differences identified as statistically significant are small in magnitude.

Figure A17 presents a similar analysis, summarizing a model that regresses an indicator for being surveyed after the NDTR on the same set of covariates to test whether the differences persist after conditioning on other possible sample differences. The only notable result here is that a one standard-deviation increase in household income is associated with around a 1% greater likelihood of being treated. There are some other larger coefficients but they

are not distinguishable from a null of no difference. In any case, I control for all variables in Figure A17 in the analyses that follow.

Table A7: Sample characteristics by treatment status

	Average		
	Pre-NDTR	Post-NDTR	Difference
Man	0.47	0.48	0.01
Age	53.4	52.5	0.82
White	0.79	0.82	0.03*
Bachelor's degree	0.44	0.45	0.01
Household income	$80,576	$89,422	$8,846*
Catholic	0.30	0.31	0.01
Other Christian	0.22	0.23	0.01
Not religious	0.38	0.37	0.01
Born in Canada	0.84	0.87	0.03*
Political interest (0 to 10)	6.45	6.47	0.02
Region: Ontario	0.35	0.32	0.03
Region: Quebec	0.29	0.30	0.01
Region: BC	0.11	0.11	0.00
Region: Atlantic	0.06	0.08	0.02*
Local Indigenous %	0.04	0.04	0.00*
French-speaker	0.25	0.28	0.03
Party ID: Bloc	0.09	0.11	0.02
Party ID: Conservative	0.25	0.28	0.03
Party ID: Liberal	0.34	0.32	0.02
Party ID: NDP	0.15	0.15	0.00
Party ID: None/Other	0.23	0.21	0.02

*p<0.05 in t-test for difference-in-means.

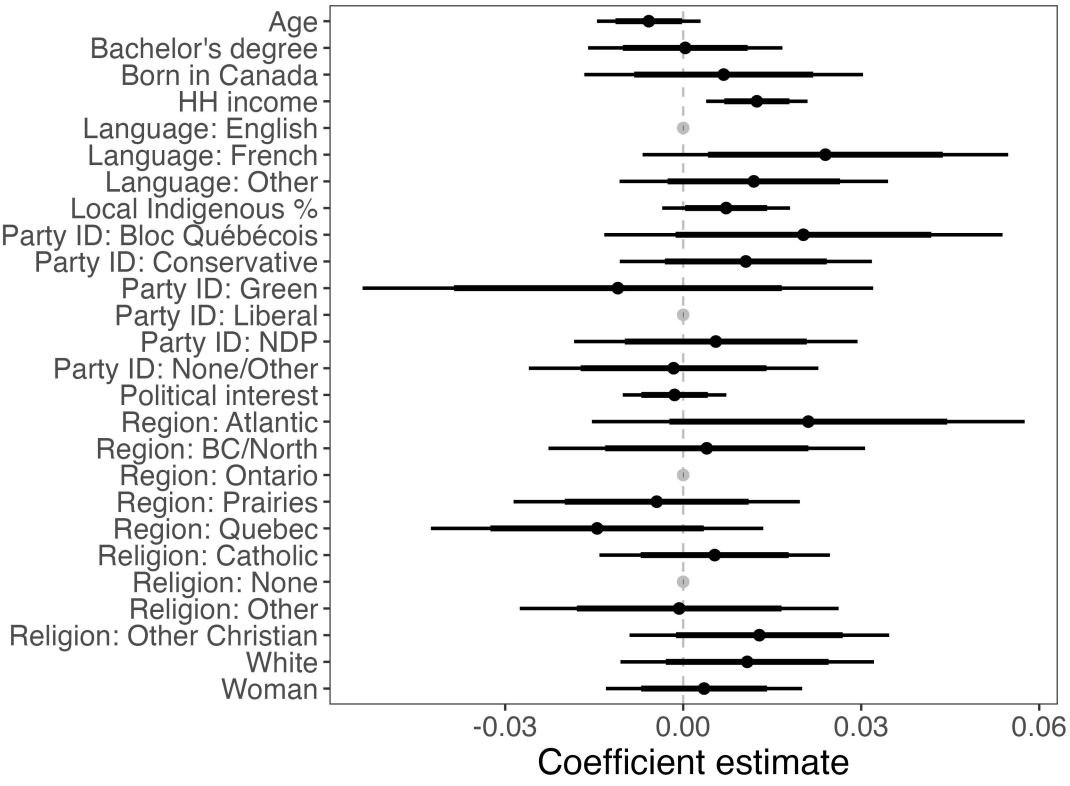


Figure A17: NDTR balance test

Plot presents coefficient estimates from an OLS model regressing treatment status on the variables listed on the y-axis. Bars indicate standard HC2 95% and Bonferroni-adjusted 95% confidence intervals. All variables are binary except for Age, Political Interest and HH income, which have been standardized such that the coefficient represents the implied effect of a one-standard deviation change. Reference categories for categorical variables are identified by grey points. ($n = 11,440$).

E.2 Effects of NDTR on beliefs in systemic racism

To test for whether the new holiday and the media coverage that came with it had any effect on beliefs in systemic racism, I regress this attitudinal outcome on an indicator for being surveyed on or after the NDTR. Table A8 summarizes the results. Overall, there is no strong indication that attitudes improved as a result of the renewed attention to the residential school history several months after the initial unmarked graves coverage.

The results are slightly different depending on whether I employ covariate adjustment, but in the model most favourable to identifying an effect of the increase in issue salience, the renewed attention only produced around 4% of a standard deviation stronger beliefs in

systemic racism. This point estimate is around 43% of the effect of the initial unmarked graves announcement and is not statistically significant, despite a sample size almost three times as large as that used in the main analysis (see Figure 1).

Overall, these results provide suggestive evidence that the reversion to baseline attitudes toward racism are not driven primarily by issues of salience or social desirability. If that were the case, respondents surveyed just after the salience-boosting NDTR would have provided responses that more strongly endorsed the existence of systemic racism.

Table A8: NDTR and belief in anti-Indigenous systemic racism

	Belief in systemic racism	
Surveyed on or after NDTR	−0.004	0.042
	(0.034)	(0.033)
Observations	12,369	10,729
Controls	No	Yes
R^2	0.000	0.194

Coefficients are expressed in terms of pre-NDTR standard deviations. In model 2, the following covariates are included but not reported: gender, born in Canada, education, household income, party ID, political interest, religion, language, white, electoral district Indigenous percentage, province, and birth-decade fixed effects. *p<0.05

F. Heterogeneous responses

F.1 Partisan effect heterogeneity in quasi-experiment

One of the strongest predictors of non-Indigenous Canadians' beliefs in systemic racism is partisanship (see Figure A1). Moreover, this variable has proven an important determinant of how individuals respond to information related to racism in the American context (e.g. Chudy and Jefferson 2021; Fang and White 2022; Reny and Newman 2021). For these

reasons, we might expect that supporters of different political parties may have different responses to news about unmarked graves.

To investigate whether the effects of the grave announcement differ by partisanship, I estimate conditional average treatment effects (CATEs) by interacting party identification with the post-announcement dummy in the specification from Table 1 in the main text. The results, summarized in Figure A18, indicate that there are no substantively meaningful or statistically significant differences in treatment effects across partisan categories. There is also no evidence of a backlash effect for any subgroup: the announcement improved beliefs in systemic racism for partisans of all stripes. The only notable heterogeneity is the essentially null CATEs among supporters of minor parties and nonpartisans. In the next section, I show that this pattern is unlikely to be driven by differences in political interest.

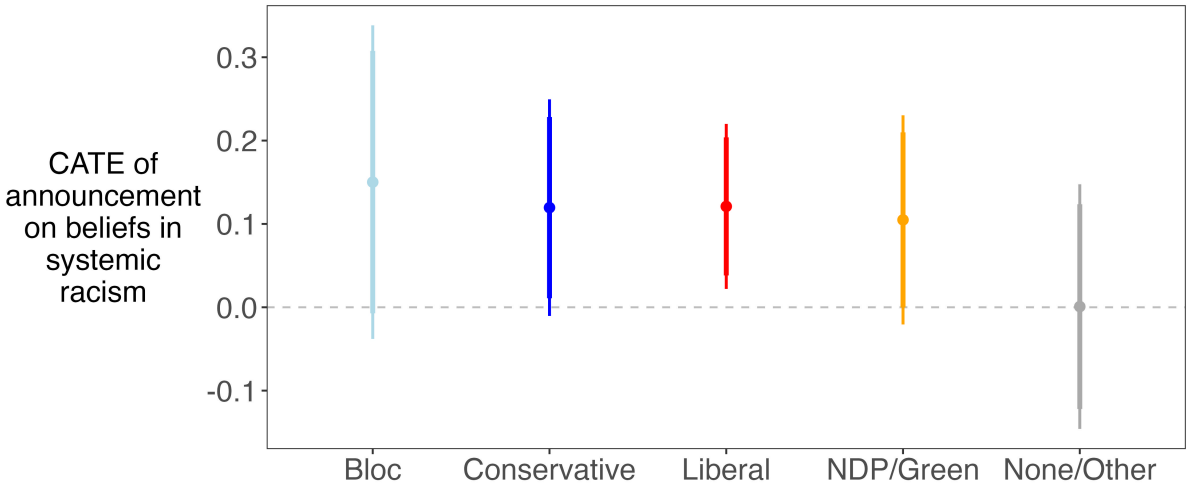


Figure A18: Effects of unmarked graves announcement by Party ID

Plot presents CATE estimates from an OLS model interacting treatment status (i.e. being surveyed after the first unmarked graves announcement) with Party ID. Coefficients are expressed in terms of pre-announcement standard deviations. Model controls for gender, born in Canada, Bachelor's degree, log household income, party ID, turnout in 2019, Christian, language, white, electoral district Indigenous percentage, province, and birth-decade fixed effects. Bars indicate 90 and 95% HC2 confidence intervals. ($n = 3,643$).

F.2 Quasi-experiment causal forest

Section F.1 investigated heterogeneity in responses to the unmarked graves news with respect to partisan identities. Yet there are numerous other subgroups that might be expected to be more or less affected by the news: white people, older people, those with less interest in the news, Catholics, immigrants and so on. I take a data-driven approach to identifying these kinds of heterogeneous treatment effects among various subgroups by training an honest causal forest (Athey and Wager 2019; Wager and Athey 2018). Causal forests are an ensemble method based on aggregating individual tree-based models that recursively partition a "splitting" sample of the data along covariate values in order to maximize treatment effect variation within each leaf (partition of the data). Treatment effects, $\hat{\tau}_i$, are then estimated for each observation in a separate "estimation" sample of the data by assigning the mean differences in outcomes between treated and control observations within each leaf.

Figure A19 summarizes the relationships between these estimated individual-level treatment effects (on the y-axis) and several pre-treatment covariates. There are a few noteworthy patterns. First, in line with the results in Section F.1, there is little difference in treatment effects by partisanship. Second, the most notable heterogeneity can be seen with respect to the percentage of Indigenous people living in one's local electoral district: the unmarked graves produced essentially no effect on structural racism attitudes among non-Indigenous respondents living in districts where Indigenous people made up more than 10% of the population. In fact, this variable the most important splitting criterion in the causal forest. Third, the news of the unmarked graves appears to have produced more positive effects on belief in systemic racism among those who may have had less exposure to the residential school history before 2021: immigrants, those with lower political interest, less education, and that have less trust in the media and follow the news less closely. It is also the case that men, whites and those that live in the Prairies updated their views on systemic racism less after the news broke.

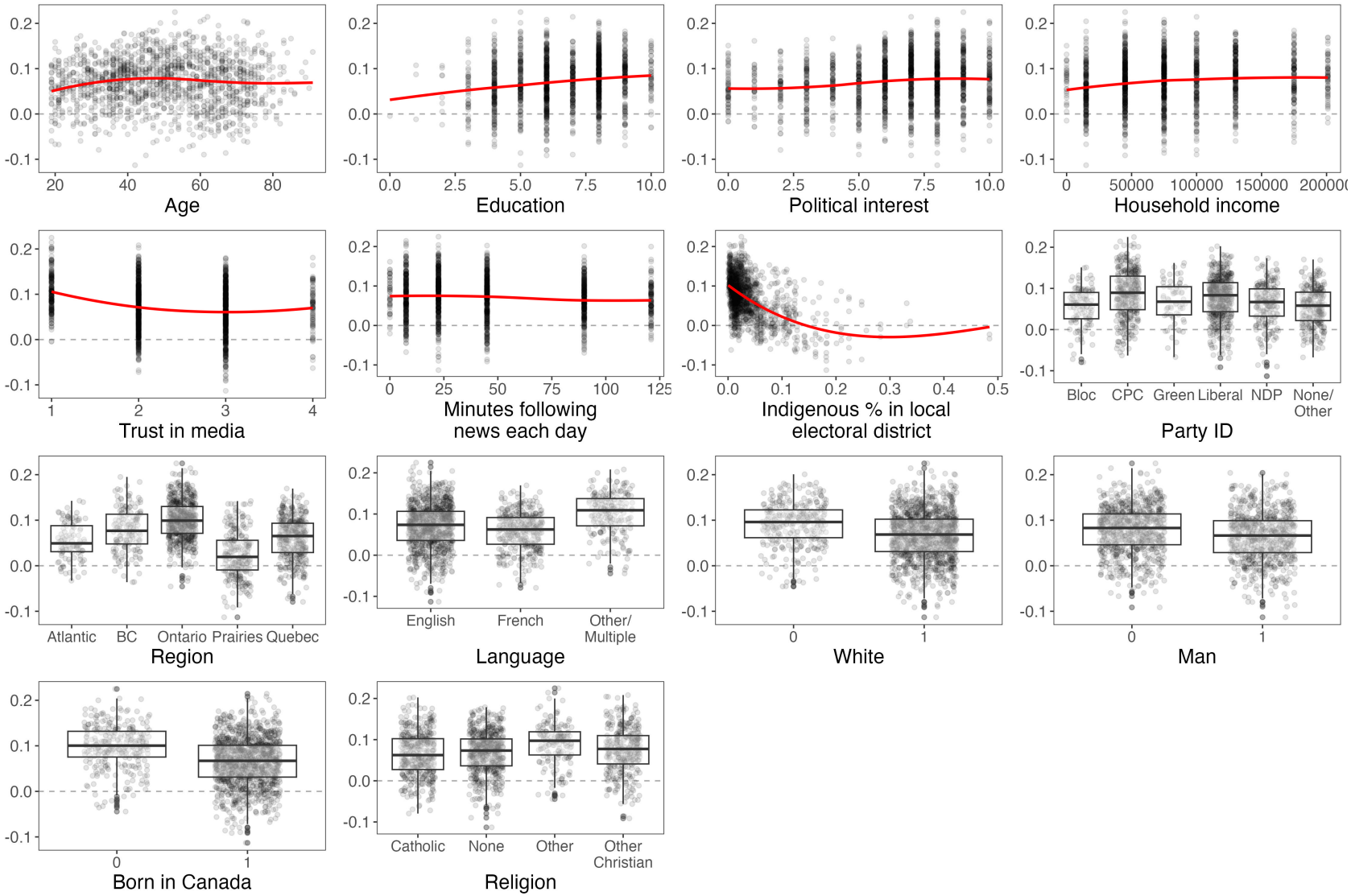


Figure A19: Causal forest estimated treatment effects and respondent characteristics

Plot summarizes the bivariate relationships between covariates and the estimated treatment effects ($\hat{\tau}$) for each observation in the test dataset. The y-axis in each plot is the estimated treatment effect.

That being said, the magnitude of these differences is quite small. Overall, there is actually little variability in units in response to the news of the unmarked graves. Figure A20 summarizes the individual-level estimated treatment effects and their variability. Most $\hat{\tau}$ values fall within 0 to 0.2 s.d. and there is a fair degree of uncertainty around these estimates. Perhaps most importantly, 90% of all observations were estimated to have a positive treatment effect, meaning there is little evidence of backlash among particular subgroups.

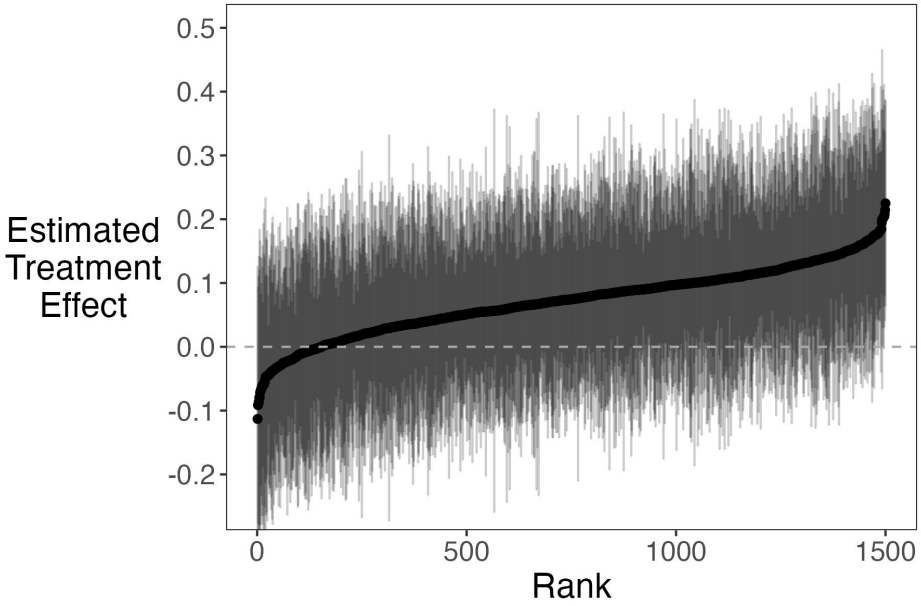


Figure A20: Causal forest estimated treatment effects

Plot presents the estimated treatment effect ($\hat{\tau}$) for each observation in the test dataset, ranked by their $\hat{\tau}$ values.

Finally, the bivariate plots earlier ignore correlations among covariates and do not capture estimation uncertainty. An alternative summary CATE measure is the best linear projection (BLP), a doubly robust estimate of the following linear model:

$$\tau(\mathbf{X_i}) = \alpha + \mathbf{X_i}\beta$$

where $\tau(\mathbf{X_i})$ is the CATE and $\mathbf{X_i}$ is a vector of covariates. Of course, this modelling approach assumes linearity between the CATEs and covariates, which may not be strictly true given the relationships in Figure A19, but it does offer a useful starting point for characterizing

effect heterogeneity.

Figure A21 summarizes the coefficients from the BLP. Most of the patterns in the bivariate plots hold up in this analysis: while there is not a significant amount of effect heterogeneity, some subgroups do exhibit marginally different responses to the treatment. For example, women were more affected by the news, while those have less trust in the media, lower political interest and have a larger Indigenous population in their area updated their beliefs less positively about the existence systemic racism. Aside from gender, none of these differences are statistically significant.

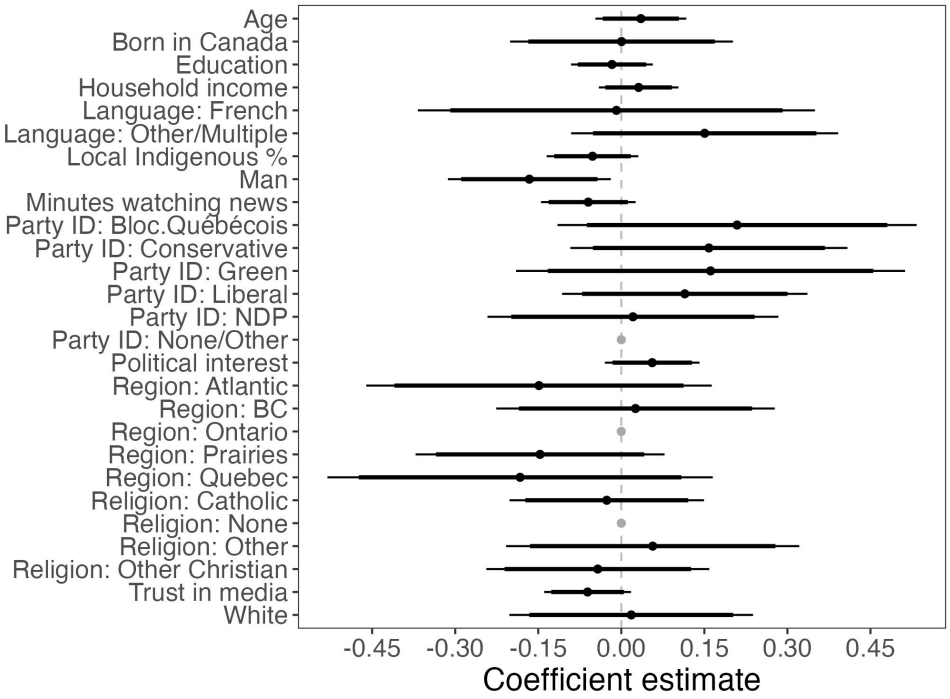


Figure A21: Best linear projection for causal forest estimated treatment effects

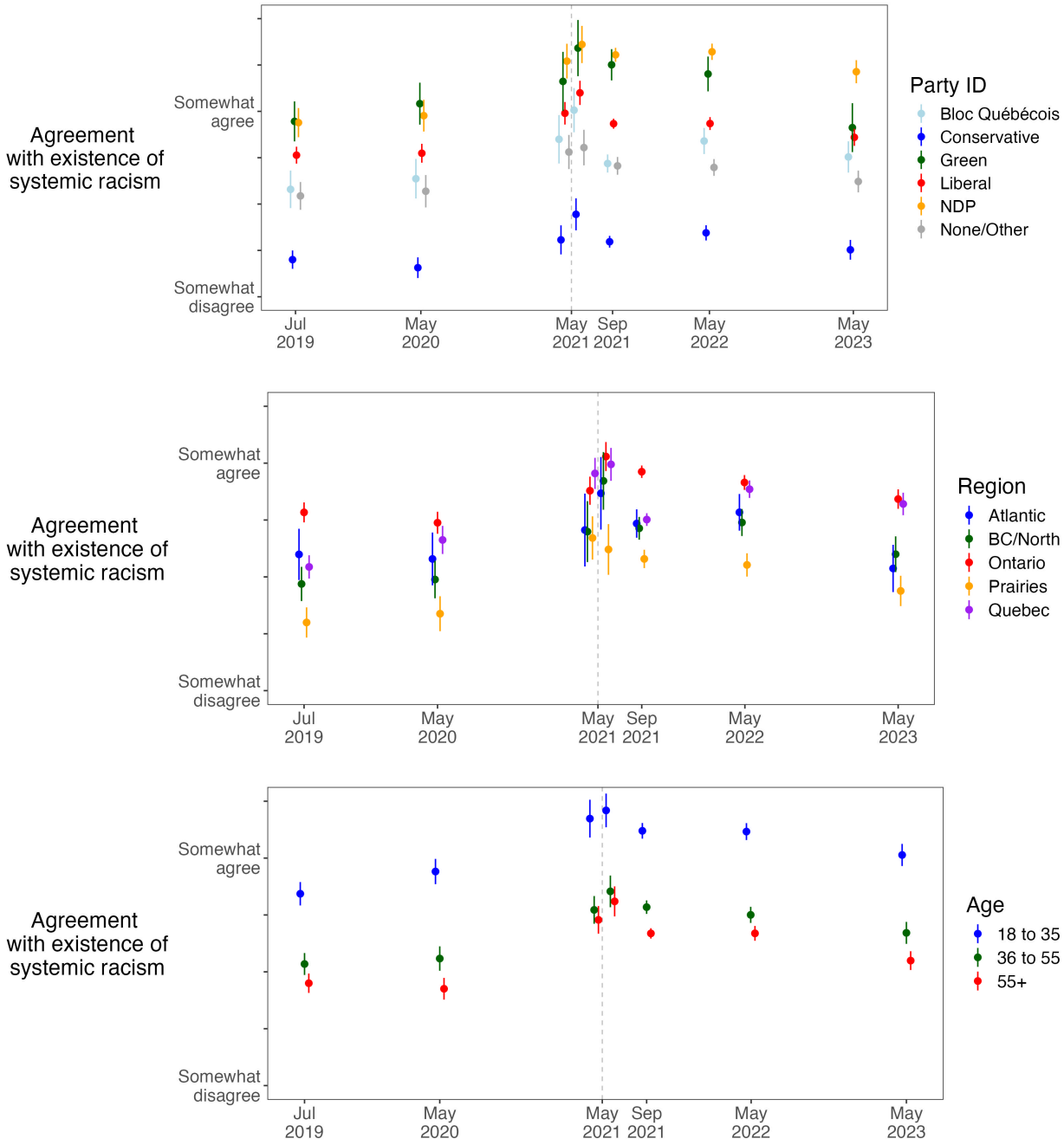
Plot presents the coefficient estimates from a best linear projection of the CATEs on covariates listed in the y-axis. The outcome variable is th estimates treatment effect, $\hat{\tau}$. All covariates are categorical except age, education, household income minutes watching news and trust in media, which have all be standardized to represent implied effects in terms of standard deviation changes. ($n = 2,251$).

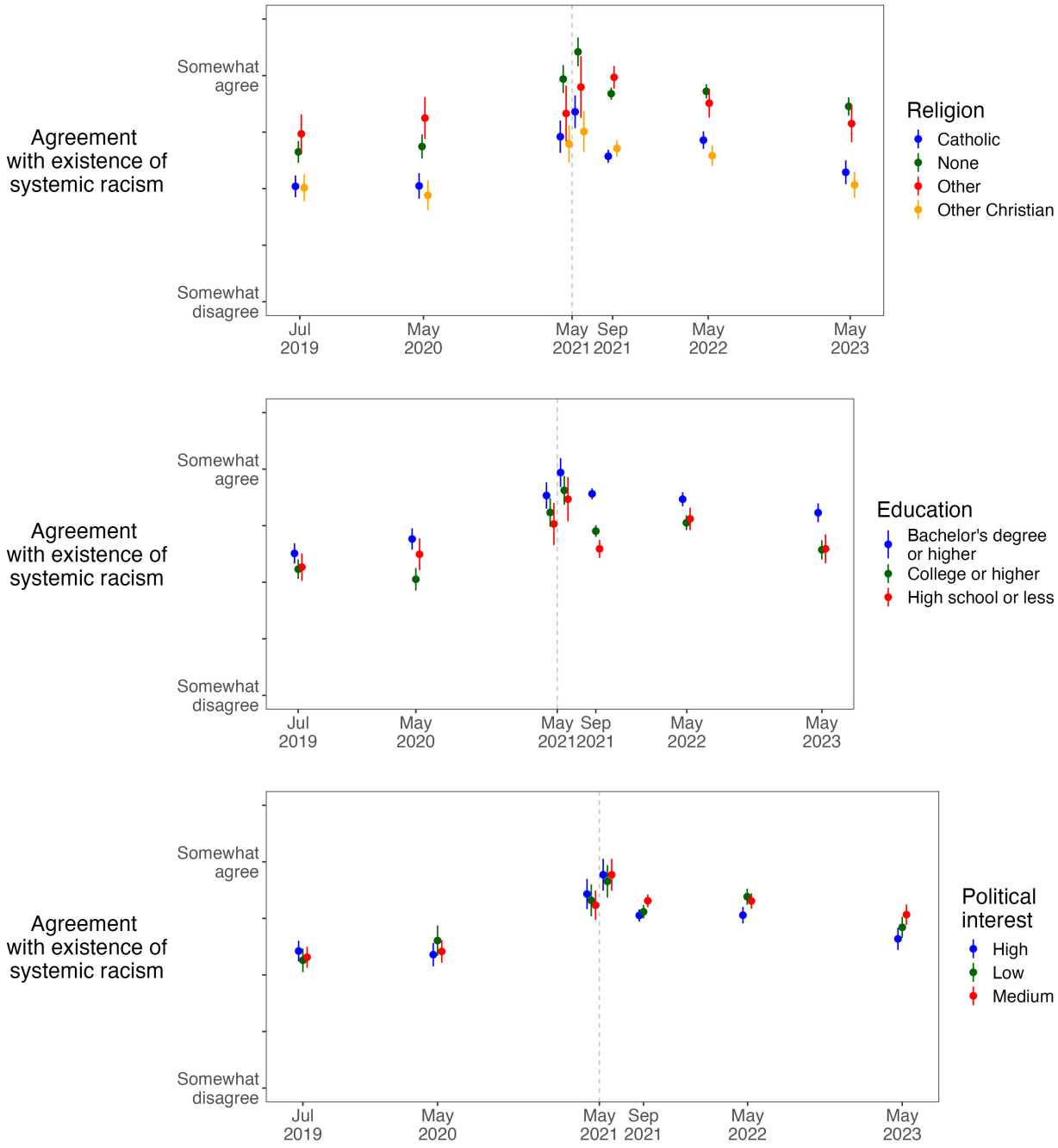
F.3 Heterogeneity in attitudinal persistence

In Sections F.1 and F.2, I show that there is minimal heterogeneity in responses to the initial news of the unmarked graves. In this section I show that there are also no major

differences in patterns of attitudinal persistence across relevant subgroups. Figure A22 plots the average agreement with the two systemic racism items over time separately across values of several different pre-treatment variables. Recall that in Figure 3 from the main text, after an increase in beliefs in the existence of systemic racism after the initial unmarked graves news in May 2021, levels of agreement with the two items returned to baseline and possibly even worsened in a September 2021 survey and did not change in a final survey in May 2022.

Overall, this pattern is generally the case for all subgroups in Figure A22 as well. There are some differences in the magnitude of attitudinal decay or persistence, but almost every group returned to baseline or worse in the September 2021 survey. One exception is the group of atheists and agnostics, but given the number of comparisons being made here, it is not surprising that at least one subgroup would display an unexpected pattern and so it is difficult to know if this result is just noise. The larger takeaway is that on average, non-Indigenous Canadians with various background characteristics responded in the same way to the initial news and then reverted to prior beliefs in similar ways.


Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Party ID
Bloc Québécois
Conservative
Green
Liberal
NDP
None/Other
Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Region
Atlantic
BC/North
Ontario
Prairies
Quebec
Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Age
18 to 35
36 to 55
55+


Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Religion
Catholic
None
Other
Other Christian
Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Education
Bachelor's degree or higher
College or higher
High school or less
Agreement with existence of systemic racism
Somewhat agree
Somewhat disagree
Jul 2019
May 2020
May 2021
Sep 2021
May 2022
May 2023
Political interest
High
Low
Medium

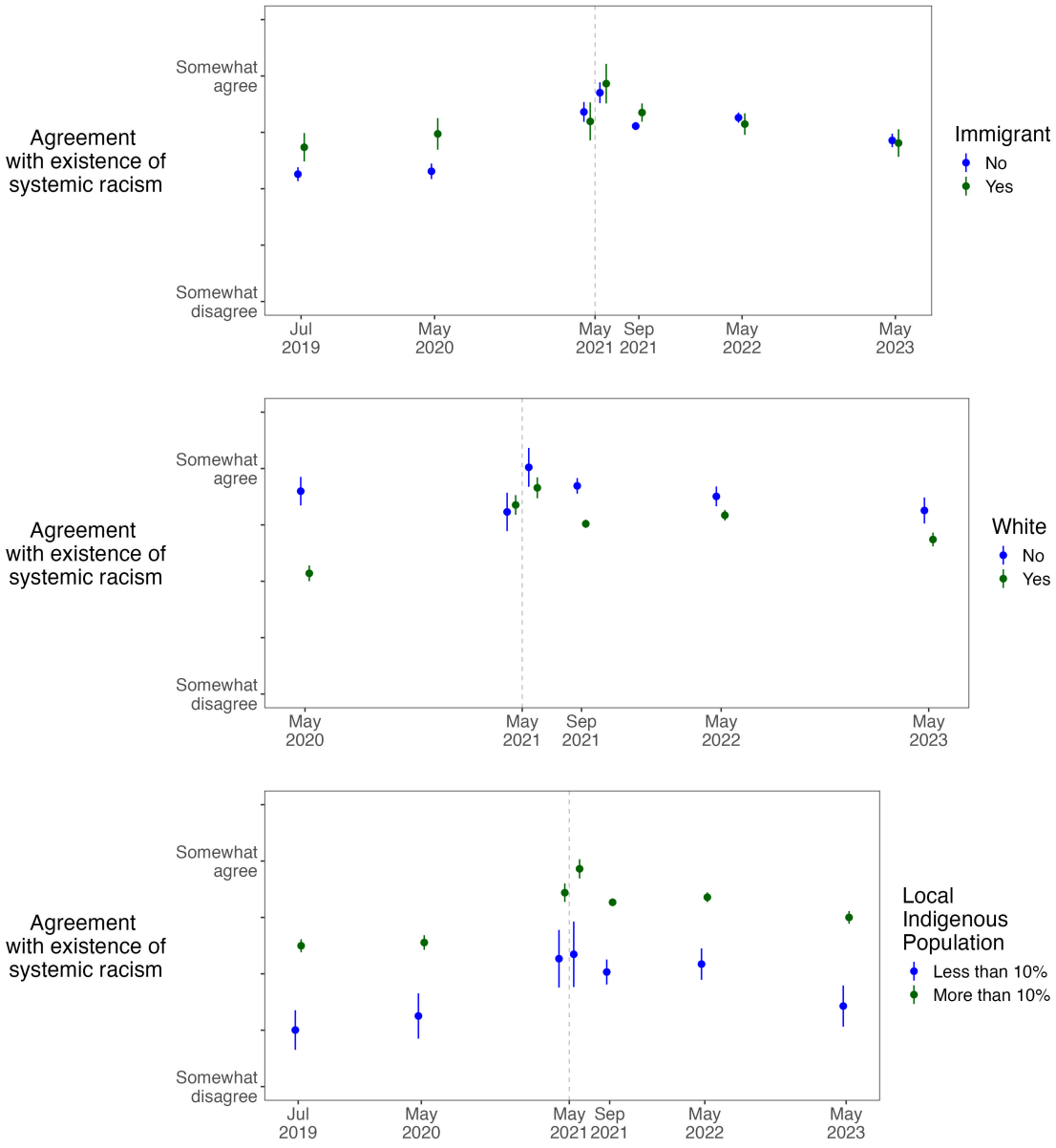


Figure A22: Agreement with systemic racism by covariates, 2019 to 2022

Plot presents average and 95% confidence intervals for the mean of a respondent-level average of the two items measuring beliefs in systemic racism (see Appendix Table A6 for each item plotted separately). Higher values indicate greater belief in the existence of systemic racism. In all but the September 2021 survey, this question was asked on a four-point Likert scale. For that specific survey, a five-point scale was used, but responses have been rescaled to match the four-point scale (see Appendix Figure A7 for individual response level prevalence over time).

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