

Do Race and Political Identity Influence Attitudes Toward Protesting the Government?

Research Question

- Does race have a significant effect on one's attitude toward protests against the government?
- Does the racial difference depend on political views?

Significance

- There have been Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests since it was founded in 2013.
- The NFL protests started in 2016 and are still happening today.
- These protests have received public backlash in the last two years (Vera, 2018).
- NFL teams are fined if players choose to kneel during anthem (Vera, 2018).

Background

- In August 2016, Colin Kaepernick sat on the bench during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial oppression.
- Individuals who are more conservative, who agree with Trump's remarks about protesting, and who report being more patriotic are significantly less likely to agree with protesting actions (Intravia, Piquero, & Piquero, 2017)
- Black Lives Matter and other recent political movements are made up mostly of the millennial generation.
- Millennials tend to lean left in political views.

Hypotheses

- Non-White respondents are more likely than White respondents to approve of protests against the government.
- Racial differences in attitudes toward protests against the government are greater among liberals than conservatives.

Data and Sample

- General Social Survey (GSS)
- Collected in 2016 (N = 2,867)
- American adults aged 18 and older living in non-institutionalized households who speak English or Spanish

Dependent Measure

- Attitudes toward Protesting the Government
 - Combination of the two questions:
 - Organizing protest marches and demonstrations
 - Organizing public meetings to protest against the government
- 1 = Definitely or probably allowed in both questions: 75.6%
- 0 = Definitely or probably not allowed: 24.4%

Independent Measure

- Racial Identity, "What race do you consider yourself?"
 - Black, White, or other?
- 0 = White 73.2%
- 1 = Non-White 26.8%

Control Measure

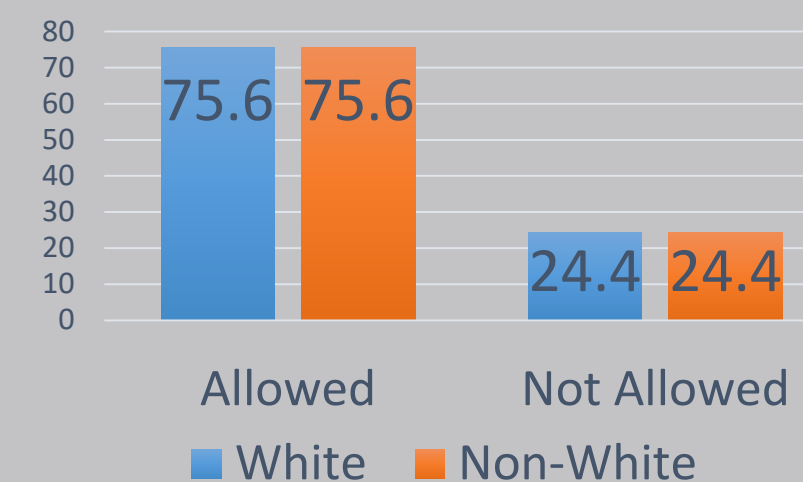
- Political Views
 - 0 = Extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal: 33.7%
 - 1 = Moderate: 37.4%
 - 2 = Extremely conservative, conservative, slightly conservative: 28.9%

Analytical Plan

- Crosstabulation and Chi-square test using SPSS

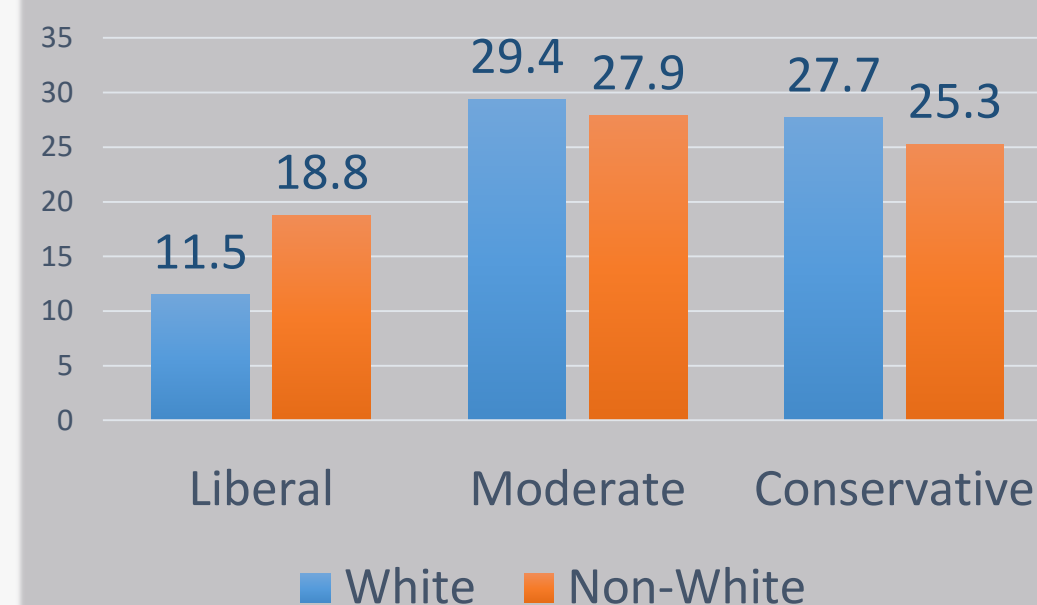
Results

Figure 1. % Approving or Disapproving Protests by Race



Note. Chi square test was not significant $p < .05$

Figure 2. % Disapproving Protests by Race and Political View



Note. Chi square tests for racial differences were not significant at $p < .05$ for all political views with $p = .06$ for liberals.

Summary of findings

- Most respondents approve of protesting the government.
- There was little racial difference in percentage of people who approve of protests.
- White liberals appear to be more likely to approve of protesting against the government than non-White liberals. The difference was only marginally significant ($p = .06$).

Policy Implications & Future Research

- NFL players and BLM should be allowed to protest racial oppression.
- Backlash due to recent protests may be due to variables such as age or attitudes toward other variables (Kneeling or sitting, identity of protester).
- Racial differences in approval may occur depending on a given issue and a kind of social movement.

References

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- Milkman, R. (2017). A new political generation: Millennials and the post-2008 wave of protest. *American Sociological Review, 82*(1), 1 – 31.
- Neuman, S. (2018, August 10). NFL Players renew anthem protests as preseason starts. Retrieved March 29, 2019, from <https://www.npr.org/2018/08/10/637383892/nfl-players-renew-anthem-protests-as-pre-season-starts>
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- Vera, A. (2018, September 04). How national anthem protests took Colin Kaepernick from star QB to unemployment to a bold Nike ad. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/04/us/colin-kaepernick-controversy-q-and-a/index.html>