

The Right (and Left) to Petition:

Unpacking Partisan Differences in Political Protest Intolerance¹

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Abstract:

Political protest is an important democratic agent of social change, but its efficacy depends on public support. Political scientists know little about the correlates of such support, partially because the (mostly dated) literature has focused exclusively on case studies of *progressive* protests. Based on this literature, it is impossible to know if conservatism really predicts intolerance toward protests in a generalized way, or if it simply predicts disdain toward progressive causes and protestors. And if the former is true, researchers currently lack any understanding of why that is the case. In two survey experimental studies, we examine the capacity of ideology and party identification to predict protest intolerance, *as conditioned by the ideological content of specific protests*. We observe that protest intolerance is indeed much more pronounced on the Right, *even when the protestors are kindred spirits*. We then aim to unpack that partisan/ideological asymmetry, testing competing hypotheses about the relative predictive efficacy of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, education, religiosity, perceived relative deprivation, and trust in government. The data provide strongest support for social dominance orientation, followed by authoritarianism and education. Religiosity, trust in government and perceived deprivation are not meaningful independent predictors.

¹ Upon final review of the manuscript, the authors will direct reviewers and readers to a website that will include a replication dataset and command syntax.

The right to petition is a 1st Amendment safeguard against governmental tyranny and an important instrument of social change (e.g., Madestam et al. 2013, Wallace, Zepeda-Millán, and Jones-Correa. 2014, Branton et al. 2015; but see Schreiber 1976). But its efficacy depends upon mass support; if large swaths of the mass public view protests as inappropriate or even illegitimate, activists have little hope of achieving their policy objectives (e.g. Schattschneider 1960, Jeffries et al. 1971, Schumaker 1975, Kernell 1986, Stern et al. 1999; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Lee 2002, Agnone 2007, Chenoweth and Stephan 2012). Thus, it is to the chagrin of such activists that many Americans tend to hold unfavorable views toward protestors and protest behavior (e.g., Gamson 1975, Piven and Cloward 1979, Roper Center 2018).²

Surprisingly little research has sought to understand why this is the case. Investigations of political intolerance, more generally, have identified religious traditionalism, lower levels of education, and right-wing authoritarianism as important determinants (e.g., Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus 1981; Bobo 1988; Gibson 1992)—all of which are associated with political conservatism and Republican party identification (e.g., Smidt, Guth and Kellstedt 2009, Pew Research Center 2018, Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Unfortunately, those studies do not measure public attitudes toward protest, per se, but rather their willingness to “put up with” unpopular political minorities or “least-liked” groups. Given that many protest groups/causes are not necessarily unpopular, the extent to which we can rely on those studies of generalized political intolerance to inform our understanding of *protest intolerance* is limited.³

Having said that, the smattering of studies that have examined public attitudes toward protest, specifically, do tend to support the broader tolerance literature’s conclusions with respect to

² As is well known, this is also the case with regard to mass support for civil liberties more broadly (e.g., Stouffer 1964, Sullivan et al., 1981, Bobo 1988).

³ It is the case, though, that the media “protest paradigm” may often frame protestors as marginalized groups, even when they are not (e.g., Mcleod and Detenber 1999).

political conservatism and its correlates (e.g., Olsen 1968, Hall, Rodeghier, and Useem. 1986; McCright and Dunlap 2008). However, most of those studies use data from the 1960s-70s, when the most salient social movements were uniformly progressive (e.g., civil rights for African Americans and women, and opposition to the war in Vietnam). The protest studies that have been carried out in this century have relied on progressive case studies as well (especially the 2006 immigration rallies; e.g., Martinez 2008, Pantoja, Menjívar, and Magaña 2008, Barreto et al. 2009, Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipiof and Montoya. 2009, Rim 2009, Mohamed 2013, Branton et al. 2015). But conservatives have been taking to the streets in prominent ways for at least thirty years (e.g., the anti-abortion protests, Promise Keepers Men’s March, the Bundy Ranch standoff, etc.), and conservative Tea Party demonstrations were some of the most visible protests from 2008-2016 (e.g., Madestam 2013).⁴ Thus, it is entirely possible that the disproportionately conservative antipathy toward protest that researchers have unearthed is really just an artifact of case selection. That is, what looks like conservative animus toward protest might just be animus toward progressive causes, and liberals might be equally inclined to express such animus when the tables are turned.

The failure to analyze protest intolerance outside of the context of progressive protest movements represents a glaring gap in scholarly understanding. In this paper, we begin to address that gap, examining protest attitudes using conservative as well as liberal examples of activism. If the Left and Right turn out to be comparably supportive of “their own” protestors and contemptuous of their opponents’, it will undercut the prevailing conservative intolerance paradigm in political psychology. However, if the Right is in fact less supportive of protests, *even when the protestors are kindred spirits*, it will impressively fortify that conservative intolerance paradigm.

More broadly, the results of this investigation will provide fresh insight into why some social movements succeed and others fail. If Red and Blue Americans are equally inclined to eschew

⁴ Some might argue that the original American protest—the Boston Tea Party—while radical by definition—was in one respect an expression of what we now think of as political conservatism, in that it was an objection to taxation.

protests when it suits them to do so, it will suggest that liberal and conservative activists compete on an even playing field when it comes to achieving their policy goals. By contrast, if the Right tends to oppose “the other side” more instinctively, it will imply that conservative social movements face better odds of success (all else being equal). And if the Right is less inclined to support even the rights of “their own,” then social movements—liberal and conservative alike—may face a steep climb during periods of conservative ideological ascendancy (such as anytime when the country or the predominant culture feels precarious).

Finally, regardless of whether protest intolerance is symmetrical across Red and Blue Americans, this study will shed greater light on the specific determinants of protest intolerance. As we alluded to above, conventional wisdom points to authoritarianism, religious traditionalism and lower levels of educational attainment, but researchers have not considered the potential importance of social dominance orientation (SDO), government distrust, or perceived relative deprivation. Thus, in addition to testing the partisan/ideological asymmetry hypothesis, we attempt to unpack these various theoretical mechanisms and to document their relative predictive capacity.

Red vs. Blue Attitudes toward Political Protest?

There are at least five theoretical reasons to anticipate disproportionate protest intolerance among Republicans/conservatives: they tend to possess *higher* levels of (1) authoritarianism, (2) traditionalistic Christian religiosity and (3) social dominance orientation (SDO), and *lower* levels of (4) education and (5) economic/power deprivation. We review each of these potential mechanisms below.

Authoritarianism: It is now well established that those who value order, social conformity, and respect for established authority—i.e., those who are high in authoritarianism—are much more likely to identify as conservative, to hold conservative issue positions, and to vote for Republican candidates (Haidt 2012; Hetherington and Weiler 2009, Barker and Tinnick 2006). There are plenty

of left-wing authoritarians as well (e.g., Conway et al. 2017), but there is an unmistakable tendency for authoritarians to skew Right (also see Adorno et al. 1950, Altemeyer 1981, 1988). Furthermore, we know that authoritarianism is cued by perceptions of threat (e.g., Feldman and Stenner 1997, Stenner 2005), to which ideological conservatives are also known to be more sensitive. (e.g., Huddy et al. 2005, Jost et al. 2007, Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2014).

Such authoritarian impulses are naturally linked to generalized political intolerance (Stouffer 1964; Sullivan et al. 1981; Bobo 1988; Bobo and Licari 1989; Gibson 1992). It stands to reason, then, that authoritarian instincts might also drive perceptions of protest illegitimacy (Matthews and Prothro 1962, Olsen 1968, Hall 1986, McCright and Dunlap 2008, Pew Research Center 2015, Andrews, Beyerlein and Farnum 2016). After all, protests are, by definition, expressions of defiance toward established authorities. Accordingly, because authoritarianism is so strongly linked to political conservatism, it is also reasonable to hypothesize that conservative Republicans are more likely than liberal Democrats to view protest as illegitimate on its face, rather than as an important form of unconventional democratic participation.

Traditionalistic Christian Religiosity: Relatedly, several studies have revealed a relationship between traditionalistic religiosity and a lack of enthusiasm for civil liberties such as freedom of expression, the separation of church and state, and the right to privacy (e.g., Tuntiya 2005). This may be a byproduct of authoritarianism, since a focus on humility before God is a clear example of deference toward authority, or it may be the case that traditionalistic Christian “believing, behaving and belonging” (e.g., Olson and Warber 2008) imbue the faithful with authoritarian sentiment where it would not otherwise exist (e.g., Kahoe 1977). If so, given that Red Americans are so much more likely to identify as traditionalistic Christians and to attend religious services regularly (e.g., Lipka and Wormald 2016), such religiosity provides another reason to suspect that they are also less supportive of political protests.

Social Dominance Orientation: Protest scholars have yet to consider the role of another psychological orientation that is known to occupy the mindsets of political conservatives more frequently than those of liberals: *social dominance orientation (SDO)* (e.g., Pratto et al. 1994, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Sibley and Liu 2010). *SDO* shares some variance with authoritarianism, but it is conceptually quite different. Whereas authoritarianism values order and conformity, *SDO* prizes hierarchy and inter-group dominance (e.g., Sibley and Duckitt 2010). It rests on the premise that some groups of people are just naturally better suited to occupy positions of power than others (Pratto et al. 1994), so those high in *SDO* are typically quite comfortable with social and political inequality (Pratto et al. 2007), and they tend to score higher on measures of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Duckitt and Sibley 2007, Cohrs and Asbrock 2009, Sibley and Duckitt 2010).

Intuitively, then, it stands to reason that such hierarchists would tend to have less sympathy for those who challenge the established power structure, given that the standard media coverage paradigm is to portray protestors as marginalized malcontents (e.g., Mcleod and Hertog 1992). In fact, challenges to that power structure represent direct threats to the privilege that some socially dominant groups currently enjoy. To put it simply, if one believes that inequality reflects the natural order of things, then one would naturally resent institutions and practices that confront that “natural order.”

We might also expect the relationship between *SDO* and protest attitudes to look somewhat different than that between authoritarianism and protest attitudes. Whereas authoritarianism should predict opposition toward protest behavior across the board, regardless of the protestors’ grievance, the predictive capacity of *SDO* should be substantially stronger when protestors threaten existing power hierarchies (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Occupy, #Time’s Up) than when they fortify them (whether that is the expressed intent of the movement or not; e.g., Tea Party, Pro-Life).

Education: A third reason why ideological conservatives (at least the culturally focused variety) might be more inclined to consider protest illegitimate is the fact that they are now much less

likely to possess baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate degrees than are liberals. Specifically, while twenty years ago whites with college degrees were more likely to identify as Republicans, Democrats now hold more than a 20 percentage-point advantage among that education demographic, and more than a 30-point advantage among those with post-baccalaureate degrees (Pew Research Center 2018). Higher education is typically associated with greater racial, religious and sexual tolerance (e.g., Prothro and Grigg 1960, Rokeach 1960, Sullivan et al. 1981, Bobo and Licari 1989), partially because of (a) the diversity of cultures to which becomes exposed (e.g., Golebiowska 1995), (b) the attention given to civil liberties and civil rights in college general education curricula (e.g., Astin 1993, Chang 2002), and (c) the cultural norms that tend to prevail on college campuses (Dey 1997). Intuitively, then, higher education also predicts protest tolerance (e.g., Hall, Rodeghier and Useem 1986). Such asymmetry in educational attainment should drive liberals to express greater tolerance toward protestors, on average.

Perceived Relative Deprivation: Finally, given that *perceived relative deprivation* (PRD) tends to predict actual protest behavior (e.g., Stouffer 1960, Gurr 1970, Gurney and Tierney 1982), and that it predicts out-group intolerance (e.g., Pettigrew 2015), it is reasonable to hypothesize that it would predict support for protests as well (after all, one would not likely choose to participate in a protest if one were to view protests as fundamentally illegitimate or distasteful). And given that those who tend to experience greater deprivation (women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ people, and non-Christians) tend to skew liberal or at least Democratic, this provides another reason to expect higher levels of support for political protest on the Left than the Right.

In sum,

H₁: Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives to perceive protest behavior as legitimate and to view it as appropriate

H_{1a}: Authoritarianism is negatively associated with perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

H_{1b}: Traditionalistic Christian religiosity is negatively associated with perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

H_{1c}: Social Dominance Orientation is negatively associated with perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

H_{1d}: Educational attainment is positively associated with perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

H_{1e}: Perceived relative deprivation is positively associated with perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

Sympathy for the Null

However, there are also reasons to imagine that political orientations might bear no relationship at all to protest support in some overarching, context neutral sense. These include newly symmetrical partisan polarization, conservatives' disproportionate anti-government sentiment, their rising *perceptions* of relative deprivation. Their disproportionate religiosity also deserves some reconsideration in this regard.

Polarization: As we alluded to earlier, literally every examination of attitudes regarding political protest that we have come across uses a progressive social movement as the contextual backdrop. Hence, it is entirely conceivable that the observed relationship between conservatism and protest antipathy might simply reflect conservatives' (natural) opposition to progressive causes, rather than opposition to protest behavior in the abstract. So now that the shoes are sometimes marching on the other feet, progressive onlookers might well behave the exact same way as conservatives routinely did 50 years ago. Especially given contemporary partisan polarization—with Democrats now displaying comparable (if not stronger) levels of ideological constraint/intensity and animus toward those who disagree with them as Republicans have for decades (Pew Research Center 2017)—it is not unreasonable to imagine that each respective partisan tribe tends to support protests by their political allies, and oppose those of their adversaries, in roughly equal measure.

Traditionalistic Christian Religiosity (reconsidered): Likewise, when it comes to the specific role of traditionalistic religiosity, it is possible that its observed association with intolerance is entirely an artifact of case selection. It should not come as a surprise that Christians would tend to object to

public expressions of profanity, atheism, or anything that could be construed as unpatriotic or afoul of what they perceive to be God's natural law. Perhaps when it comes to other kinds of grievances, traditionalistic Christians might readily embrace protest. After all, Christian traditionalists were important players in the American revolution (e.g., Byrd 2013), and the abolitionist movement of the 1800s (e.g., Fitzgerald 2017), not to mention the first-wave of Women's Rights and Civil Rights movements (in the early and mid-twentieth century, respectively; e.g., Braude 2000, Dupont 2013, Fitzgerald 2017).⁵ And it has been traditionalistic Christians who have fueled the most salient conservative social movement of the last thirty years—the anti-abortion movement (e.g., Wilcox 1990). They have also been the most likely Americans to identify as Tea Party members (e.g., Clement and Green 2011). Hence, it is easy to imagine that the relationship between traditionalistic religiosity and protest support is entirely a function of the particular grievance in question.

Perceived Relative Deprivation (reconsidered): Moreover, as for the potential influence of perceived relative deprivation (PRD), it is important to remember that people do not need to be powerless in an objective sense to become exercised. Rather, PRD activates action when there is a mismatch between how much power they perceive themselves to have and how much they believe they should have (e.g., Walker and Smith 2001). With that in mind, it is worth pointing out that those who disproportionately identify as politically conservative (e.g., white, male, heterosexual Christians who are over 50, did not complete a college degree, and live in less densely populated areas) are much more likely than they were twenty years ago to perceive themselves as losing ground to other groups, culturally (if not necessarily economically). While they may not be deprived in any real way—at least not by comparison to women, racial/ethnic minorities, sexual minorities or religious minorities—the position of economic and cultural hegemony they enjoyed in decades past is undeniably eroding (Kimmel 2013, Hochschild 2016, Jones 2016, Vance 2016). To be sure, gender inequality is being called out much more visibly and sexual harassment is being taken much more

⁵ Of course, Christian traditionalists' role in each of these movements was splintered and complicated. There were always contingents who opposed the movements, including most white evangelicals in the south when it came to abolition.

seriously than it used to be, homosexuality and transgender identity are much more accepted, the country elected an African American president (twice), and fewer people attend Christian churches every year. Furthermore, from their perspective, those who occupy the official corridors of power and cultural prominence (government, science, media, academia) seem to be sneering at them while they encourage other groups of people to jump the line (Hochschild 2016). Indeed, in the age of Trump, conservatives cannot watch mainstream news, turn on late-night TV, tune into an awards show, attend a concert or download popular music without being reminded how “deplorable” their traditionalistic views and electoral preferences are. As such, many conservatives *perceive* themselves to be culturally deprived, at least with respect to the position they held in the not too distant past. And that perception might make them want to protest, or at least feel sympathetic toward protestors that reflect their cultural and political perspectives.

Trust in Government: Another factor that may balance the scales a bit in terms of the relationship between ideology and protest support (and thus support the null hypothesis) is differential levels of trust in government between liberals and conservatives (see (Hutter and Braun 2014 for a good treatment of trust and protest *behavior*). While both groups tend to exhibit higher levels of trust when their own team is in power than when “the other guys” are, conservatives tend to be much more sensitive to political context in this way (e.g., Hetherington 2005, Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). That is, holding constant the party who happens to control congress or the Presidency at any given time, conservatives are generally less trusting of government than are liberals—which stands to reason given their policy positions and rhetoric. And on its face, protest is associated with some discontent with government, so perhaps the conservative tendency to dislike government may lead them to sympathize with protestors—again, at least when those protestors are agitating for conservative causes. In other words:

H₂: Trust in government is positively associated with positive perceptions of protest behavior as legitimate and appropriate

Given all of this, in much in the same way that those who study political tolerance had to expand their measures to include attitudes unpopular groups on the Right (racists, Nazis, Christian fundamentalists) in order to clearly distinguish support expressions of tolerance, in general, from expressions of support for liberal voices (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus 1982; Marcus et al. 1995; Gibson 2008), it is important scholars to consider examples of conservative protests as context if we are to gain a proper understanding of tolerance for political protest.

Testing the Partisan/Ideological Asymmetry Hypothesis

In the January 2018, we fielded an online survey experiment to a representative sample of Americans (n=1000), using *Yougov's* Panel.⁶ We performed a series of binary probit analyses, examining the capacity of the various characteristics described above to predict public tolerance toward political protests, as conditioned by whether respondents were primed to think of either liberal or conservative activists (or nothing [i.e. a control group]).

Measurement

We measured protest tolerance in two ways, with the following questions:

- (1) (*Perceived Protest Appropriateness*): “In the past year, we have seen several groups of citizens stage disruptive protests against what they see as misuse of government power. In your view, are such anti-government protests appropriate or inappropriate?” (0=inappropriate; 1=appropriate; 65% appropriate)⁷
- (2) (*Perceived Protest Legitimacy*): “Regardless of whether you think such anti-government protests are appropriate, are they legitimate or illegitimate?” (0=illegitimate; 1=legitimate; 69% legitimate).

⁶ For technical details regarding the *Yougov* panel, including sampling, weighting, and so on, see <https://yougov.co.uk/about/panel-methodology/>.

⁷ The anti-government framing of these questions could have primed general anti-government sentiment, which could have encouraged greater conservative positivity toward the protests than would otherwise be the case. In other words, if we observe that conservatives are less likely than liberals to view protests as legitimate and appropriate even with this framing of the questions, the external validity of that finding will be very strong. However, if we observe that liberal and conservative sympathy for protestors is symmetrical, it could be a partial artifact of the question wording.

As respondents saw both questions, one randomized third of the sample saw an image of activists protesting President Trump's proposed ban on people from most Muslim countries from entering the country:



Another randomized third of the sample saw an image of anti-abortion protestors:



The final third of the sample was randomly assigned to the control group, which saw no image. In general, respondents were a little more likely to view protest as legitimate than appropriate, and exposure to either image was associated with higher levels of support. Specifically, 57 percent of control group respondents viewed protest as appropriate and 64 percent of them viewed it as legitimate. Respondents who saw the Muslim ban protest image were not statistically different, but those who saw the abortion protest image were about eight percentage-points less likely to view protest as appropriate ($p < 0.05$; but they were not statistically less likely to view it as legitimate).⁸

Our initial models addressed a relatively simple question: to what extent do perceptions of protest appropriateness and legitimacy differ between Democrats/liberals and

⁸ In 2016, we piloted a similar study using survey data from the *CALSPEAKS* panel of Californians, which is administered by the Institute for Social Research at Sacramento State University. The protest image treatments that we used in that study were of either Black Lives Matter protestors or of Western rancher protestors at the 2016 standoff at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon (the Bundy family and followers). The results of our main hypothesis test (with respect to partisan/ideological asymmetry) lead to a similar conclusion to what we report here. The full description and results of the 2016 study are observable in the Supplementary Materials.

Republicans/conservatives, and how is that conditioned by the experimental treatment to which respondents were exposed? Using the control group as the reference category, we created two simple treatment variables (Muslim ban protest image vs. other; abortion ban protest image vs. other), and interacted each of them, in successive models, with self-identified partisan or ideological identification (also including those variables in the respective models). The original party identification and ideology variables were on seven-point scales (strong Democrat/liberal to strong Republican/conservative), but to keep things simple, in the models we discuss here, we used three-point measures for each (0=Democrats [and Democratic leaners]/liberals; .5=Pure Independents/Moderates; 1=Republicans [and Republican leaners]).⁹

To account (to some degree, at least) for the political context regarding protest behavior at the time of our data collection, we also included controls for (a) Trump support during the 2016 *nomination* season and (b) Clinton support during the 2016 *nomination* season, reasoning that those who had been Clinton supporters from the beginning were most likely to be incensed at the Trump presidency and thus more likely to have participated in a Women’s March (or sympathized with it), and that those who had been Trump supporters from the very beginning might be particularly contemptuous of protest because most of them in 2017-18 had been directly or indirectly protesting his presidency. Furthermore, because of the racial and gender resentment that has been shown to have animated some “original” Trump supporters (e.g., Tesler 2016; Luttig, Federico and Levine 2017; Wayne, Valentino and Oceno 2017; Nalder, Conroy and Martin 2016), we reasoned that they might be more inclined than other conservatives/Republicans to oppose protests designed to advance the causes of women or ethnically disadvantaged groups.

Finally, we rounded out the models by controlling for (1) race/ethnicity (1=white), (2) gender (1=female), (3) age (18-92), (4) gross family income (0=<\$10k; 15=\$500k or more), and (5)

⁹ The conclusions drawn from models using the fuller scales do not differ from what we present here. The same is true when we use four-point measures of our dependent variables, accounting for strength of attitudes, and estimate the models using ordinal probit regression.

political news interest (1=response follows politics and public affairs in the news all or most of the time; 0=less),¹⁰ We computed standard errors using the delta method (Ai and Norton 2003).

Results

Table 1 displays the full statistical results. To ease interpretation, we converted the probit coefficients to differences in the predicted probabilities of perceiving protest as appropriate or legitimate, and we calculated the conditional effects for each constitutive term under each of the two conditions (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005, Berry Golder and Milton 2012. The appendix includes visual displays of the main findings with respect to ideology.

As the table reveals, in the control condition, Democrats and liberals are 29 and 41 percentage-points, respectively, more likely to view protest behavior as appropriate than are Republicans and conservatives, and they are 29 and 31 percentage-points more likely to view protest as legitimate. Republicans (but not conservatives) seem to be even less likely to view protest of Trump's Muslim ban favorably, though the difference is not statistically significant.¹¹ Most interestingly, though, is the fact that the anti-abortion treatment has no impact on the partisan differences. That is, when primed to think in terms of the most prominent and consistent Republican protest behavior of the past 40 years, Republicans were no more inclined to view such behavior as appropriate or legitimate than where control group respondents. Ideological differences are also not affected by the experimental primes when it comes to judging protest *legitimacy*. And while conservatives were about twice as likely to view protests as *appropriate* when they saw the pro-life

¹⁰ In alternative models, also as a robustness check, we replaced *Political Interest* with a measure of the number of days in the previous week that respondents reported consuming political news. The results from these models do not differ significantly from those we report below.

¹¹ We also estimated simpler models, without the interaction term, which reveal that party ID and ideology are substantively meaningful and statistically significant predictors of protest attitudes, independent of the image one had been randomly assigned to see and the controls.

protest image than when they saw nothing, liberals were still 20 percentage-points more likely to do so in the pro-life image condition (!).¹²

Table 1:
Party ID, Ideology and Perceptions of Political Protest Appropriateness and Legitimacy

	Appropriateness		Legitimacy	
	dy/dx (p<)	dy/dx (p<)	dy/dx (p<)	dy/dx (p<)
<i>Anti-Muslim Ban Treatment</i>	.12 (.01)	.55 (.36)	.11 (.02)	.51 (.38)
<i>Anti-Abortion Treatment</i>	.10 (.03)	.01 (.86)	.06 (.21)	.03 (.64)
<i>Party ID (0-1; GOP=1)</i>	-.29 (.01)		-.29 (.01)	
<i>Party ID * Anti-Muslim Ban Treatment</i>	-.05 (.53)		-.09 (.23)	
<i>Party ID * Anti-Abortion Treatment</i>	.04 (.54)		.07 (.32)	
<i>Ideology (0-1; Conservative=1)</i>		-.41 (.01)		-.31 (.01)
<i>Ideology * Anti-Muslim Ban Treatment</i>		.10 (.28)		.02 (.79)
<i>Ideology * Anti-Abortion Ban Treatment</i>		.21 (.01)		.11 (.19)
<i>Trump Nomination Supporter</i>	-.13 (.01)	-.24 (.01)	-.12 (.01)	-.23 (.01)
<i>Clinton Nomination Supporter</i>	.07 (.02)	.08 (.01)	.05 (.07)	.07 (.02)
<i>Female</i>	-.03 (.31)	-.03 (.29)	-.02 (.55)	-.01 (.69)
<i>White</i>	-.01 (.65)	-.04 (.23)	.01 (.77)	-.01 (.63)
<i>Age (18-92)</i>	-.72 (.01)	-.58 (.01)	-.10 (.01)	-.36 (.08)
<i>Income (<\$10k->\$500k)</i>	.58 (.02)	.30 (.24)	.04 (.24)	.28 (.25)
<i>News Interest</i>	.15 (.01)	.14 (.01)	.10 (.01)	.10 (.01)
<i>Pseudo R²</i>	.20	.22	.19	.18
<i>N</i>	960	976	948	964

NOTE: Equations are binary probit models, with probit coefficients converted to percentage-point differences in the probability of perceiving protest as appropriate/legitimate, associated with minimum-to-maximum increases in each independent variable.

These results provide substantial support for the hypothesis that Red Americans really do tend to be less tolerant of political protests—even *conservative protests*—than are Blue Americans; the

¹² The results are indistinguishable when we remove any or all of the control variables from the models

findings from the 70s and 80s do not appear to have been a byproduct of progressive protest case selection.¹³

It is also worth noting that our expectations regarding Trump supporters and Clinton supporters were borne out. That is, independent of partisanship or ideological identification, those who supported Trump for the Republican presidential nomination over one of his Republican rivals were between 12 and 24 percentage-points less likely to view protest favorably, depending on the model, than were other respondents. And those who supported Clinton over Sanders (or someone else) for the Democratic nomination were between five and eight percentage-points more likely to express support for protests, in general.

The remaining question to address is what, exactly, drives such asymmetrical resistance to political protest on the Right.

Unpacking the Red-Blue Asymmetry in Protest Attitudes

To test hypotheses H_{1a-e} and H_2 , we added the following variables to the models:

- (1) *Authoritarianism*: “There are a number of qualities that are important for children to have, but people disagree about which ones are most important. If you had to choose, which of the following is more important for kids to learn . . . ?”
 - Independence or Respect for Elders (0-1; 1=Respect)
 - Self-Reliance or Obedience (0-1; 1=Obedience)
 - Curiosity or Good Manners (0-1; 1=Manners)
 - Mean Index (mean=.55; standard deviation=.37).
- (2) *Social Dominance Orientation*: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements . . . ?”
 - Some people are just inferior to others (0-1; 1=strongly agree)
 - In the US, we must do more to help racial and ethnic minorities gain power and respect (0-1; 1=strongly disagree)
 - Mean index (mean= .41; standard deviation=.26).
- (3) *Traditional Christian Religiosity*: Two questions:

¹³ The sample size reported in the table is lower than that reported above because we deleted missing cases from the analysis using the listwise method.

- “Do you consider the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God?” (0-1; 1=Yes)
 - “Do you consider yourself a Born-again Christian?” (0-1; 1=Yes)
 - Mean Index (0-1; mean=.37; standard deviation=.41)
- (4) *Education*: “What is the highest level of formal education you have attained?”
- 0=< high school; 5=post-graduate degree
 - Mean=2.3; standard deviation=1.45
- (5) *Perceived Relative Deprivation*: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement . . .”
- When I look around at others getting ahead, it sometimes feels like I people like me are losing ground, and it is not right (0-1; 1=strongly agree)
 - Mean=.49; standard deviation=.32
- (6) *Trust in Government*: “How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in WASHINGTON D.C. to do what is right?”
- 0-1; 0=Just about always; .33=Most of the time; .66=Only some of the time; 1=Never
 - Mean=.60; standard deviation=.23

To get a sense of each of these variables’ relative ability to account for perceived protest legitimacy and appropriateness, and how that may vary across the treatment condition to which a given respondents was exposed (control, Muslim ban protest, anti-abortion), we removed the interaction terms and estimated four models per outcome variable, using (1) the entire sample, controlling for treatment conditions, (2) just those who had been randomly assigned to the control group, (3) just those who had been randomly assigned to the Muslim ban protest treatment, and (4) just those who had been exposed to the anti-abortion protest treatment. We did this rather than (a) complicating readers’ ability to interpret our results by including twelve interaction terms in the same model (*authoritarianism*Muslim ban treatment, authoritarianism*anti-abortion treatment, social dominance orientation*Muslim ban treatment, social dominance orientation*anti-abortion treatment*, and so on), or (b) inviting extreme tedium by discussing twelve additional models (one for each new explanatory variable and its associated multiplicative terms, across both outcome variables).¹⁴

¹⁴ We left party ID and ideology in the models, to create the most strenuous test for each of the theoretically explanatory variables and to account for residual covariation associated with these

Results

Table 2 displays the results as they pertain to perceptions of protest appropriateness. Table 3 does so with respect to perceptions of protest legitimacy. Starting with the former, we see in the first results column that authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and education reveal substantial independent predictive strength, but trust in government, traditionalistic religiosity and perceived relative deprivation hypotheses do not. And of these, social dominance orientation is the strongest. Specifically, those who score the highest in SDO are 46 percentage-points less likely to view protest as appropriate, in general, than are those who score the lowest. By comparison, the strongest authoritarians are 18 percentage-points less likely to do so than are the strongest libertarians ($p < .001$), and those with the highest levels of educational attainment are 15 percentage-points more likely to do so than are those with the lowest levels of educational attainment. ($p < .001$).¹⁵

variables that cannot be accounted for by those explanatory variables that we have discussed. In alternative specifications, we removed these variables for fear that the explanatory variables might account for party ID or ideology differentially, thus creating imbalance across the revealed effects of those variables in the multivariate models. Doing so does not change the main conclusions that we draw from our results.

¹⁵ *SDO* is a stronger predictor than *authoritarianism* despite the fact that the *SDO* index is comprised of only two items, whereas the *authoritarianism* index includes three-items—suggesting that, if anything, the authoritarianism index has less random measurement error associated with it. The consequences of random measurement error in an independent variable are coefficients that are biased downward and inflated standard errors around the estimate, thereby increasing the probability of Type II errors of statistical inference. In other words, if we had obtained a better measure of *SDO*, its predictive capacity would have likely been even stronger than what we report here (Carmines and Zeller 1979).

Table 2
Probit Regressions: Predicting Perceptions of Protest Appropriateness

	Full Sample	Control Group	Anti-Muslim Ban	Anti-Abortion
	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)
<i>Anti-Muslim Ban Treatment</i>	.04 (.04)			
<i>Anti-Abortion Treatment</i>	-.13 (.04)			
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	-.19 (.05)	-.20 (.10)	-.38 (.09)	-.03 (.08)
<i>Social Dominance Orientation</i>	-.45 (.08)	-.26 (.13)	-.89 (.16)	-.36 (.11)
<i>Education</i>	.03 (.01)	.05 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)
<i>Traditionalistic Christian Religiosity</i>	-.04 (.04)	.04 (.08)	.05 (.07)	-.17 (.06)
<i>Perceived Relative Deprivation</i>	-.03 (.06)	.05 (.11)	-.15 (.1)	-.03 (.08)
<i>Trust in Government</i>	.02 (.08)	-.05 (.15)	.15 (.13)	.07 (.11)
<i>Ideology (0-1; Conservative=1)</i>	-.19 (.06)	-.5 (.11)	-.13 (.11)	-.07 (.08)
<i>Party ID (0-1; Republican=1)</i>	-.17 (.06)	-.18 (.12)	-.2 (.1)	-.10 (.08)
<i>Hillary Clinton Supporter</i>	.09 (.04)	-.02 (.07)	.16 (.06)	.13 (.05)
<i>Trump Supporter</i>	-.12 (.06)	-.11 (.11)	-.14 (.1)	-.16 (.09)
<i>News Interest</i>	.12 (.04)	.22 (.07)	-.05 (.06)	.19 (.06)
<i>Female</i>	-.08 (.03)	-.05 (.06)	-.10 (.06)	-.02 (.05)
<i>White</i>	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.07)	.05 (.07)	-.07 (.06)
<i>Age (18-92)</i>	-.36 (.00)	-.32 (.00)	-.28 (.00)	.38 (.00)
<i>Family Income (<\$10k->\$500k)</i>	.24 (.01)	.22 (.01)	.25 (.01)	.28 (.01)
<i>Pseudo R²</i>	.28	.30	.39	.26
<i>N</i>	952	312	326	314

NOTE: Equations are binary probit models, with probit coefficients converted to percentage-point differences in the probability of perceiving protest as appropriate, associated with minimum-to-maximum increases in each independent variable.

Notably, ideological identification and party identification still predict perceptions of protest appropriateness to the tune of 18 and 16 percentage-points, respectively, even after accounting for all of these theoretical explanations, suggesting that there are other aspects of these political identities that are important, which need to be contemplated, measured, and explored. It is worth emphasizing, though, that the independent effect associated with social dominance orientation is more than twice that of these variables ($p < .01$).

The Trump support and Clinton support variables also maintain their independent explanatory power, with Trump true believers tending to be around eleven percentage-points less likely to support protests, and Clinton fans tending to be about nine percentage-points more likely.

The final thing to point out with respect to these full-sample findings is that, holding everything else constant, exposure to the anti-abortion experimental treatment condition is associated with a 13 percentage-point drop in perceived appropriateness (a five percentage-point jump from what it had been in the model with no other covariates).

Moving on now to consider the extent to which exposure to one or another treatment affects the predictive efficacy of the explanatory variables, we observe in the second through fourth results columns that SDO is the only explanatory variable that maintains statistical significance across all three treatments. In the control condition, those who scored the highest in SDO were 26 percentage-points more likely to view protest as appropriate than were those who scored the lowest. The effect jumps to 36 percentage-points in the anti-abortion protest condition, and a whopping 89 percentage-points in the Muslim ban protest condition. These effects were larger than those attributable to any other variable in all of the models—usually by very large margins.

Authoritarianism also performs well, producing a 28 percentage-point minimum-to-maximum effect among control group respondents and a 38 percentage-point effect among Muslim ban treatment respondents. It shows no capacity, however, to predict support for protest among the anti-abortion treatment group. Education fares next best: those with post-graduate degrees were about 25 percentage-points more likely to support protest than were high school drop-outs, in the control condition. However, it fails to significantly account for any variance among either of the treatment groups of respondents. Traditionalistic religiosity accounts for attitudes in the anti-abortion condition, but not in the way we had anticipated. Those who believe the Bible is authoritative and identify as Born Again are about seventeen percentage-points *less* likely than others to support protest when primed to think about Pro-life protestors. Hillary in both conditions 16 13, Trump in about 16

After accounting for these various mechanisms, ideology continues to show strong predictive capacity in the control condition (50 percentage-points) but not the others, whereas party identification displays significant strength in the Muslim-ban condition and in the control condition—if one is willing to be liberal with the standards of statistical significance ($p < .06$ in a one-tailed test)—but not in the anti-abortion condition. And as for those who supported Trump and Clinton for their respective nominations, the former group continue to be less likely to support protest (16 percentage-points) in the anti-abortion condition, but not in the others, while members of the latter group were 16 percentage-points more likely than others to support Muslim-ban protest, and 13 percentage-points more likely than others to support anti-abortion activism.

Table 3 displays the results as they concern perceptions of protest legitimacy, which is arguably a more valid measure of protest tolerance/intolerance than is appropriateness. Again, the first results column presents the findings using the full-sample of respondents. We see a similar story: minimum-to-maximum differences in (1) SDO, (2) education, and (3) authoritarianism are associated with 39, 20 and 13 percentage-point differences in perceived protest legitimacy, respectively, in the hypothesized directions. Ideology and party identification also continue to display predictive strength, even after the various mechanisms have been accounted for; strong conservatives/Republicans are 12 and 20 percentage-points less likely than strong liberals/Democrats, respectively, to see protests as legitimate. And again, trust in government, traditionalistic religiosity and perceptions of relative deprivation, were not significant predictors, but Trump and Clinton support were marginally significant—producing nine and six percentage-point effects, respectively ($p < .06$ and $p < .08$).

Table 3
Probit Regressions: Predicting Perceptions of Protest Legitimacy

	Full Sample	Control Group	Anti-Muslim Ban	Anti-Abortion
	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)	dF/dx (p<)
<i>Anti-Muslim Ban Treatment</i>	.04 (.04)			
<i>Anti-Abortion Treatment</i>	-.08 (.04)			
<i>Authoritarianism</i>	-.13 (.05)	-.20 (.09)	-.23 (.08)	.01 (.07)
<i>Social Dominance Orientation</i>	-.40 (.07)	-.19 (.12)	-.57 (.14)	-.46 (.09)
<i>Education</i>	-.02 (.05)	-.01 (.10)	.04 (.10)	-.07 (.07)
<i>Traditionalistic Christian Religiosity</i>	.01 (.07)	-.18 (.14)	.20 (.13)	.08 (.10)
<i>Perceived Relative Deprivation</i>	-.05 (.04)	-.01 (.08)	-.09 (.07)	-.04 (.06)
<i>Trust in Government</i>	.04 (.01)	.06 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.04 (.02)
<i>Ideology</i> (0-1; Strong Conservative=1)	-.12 (.05)	-.21 (.1)	.04 (.09)	-.15 (.07)
<i>Party ID</i> (0-1; Strong Republican=1)	-.2 (.05)	-.31 (.11)	-.27 (.09)	-.11 (.07)
<i>Hillary Clinton Supporter</i>	.06 (.03)	.07 (.07)	.14 (.05)	.03 (.06)
<i>Trump Supporter</i>	-.09 (.05)	-.09 (.10)	-.14 (.10)	-.01 (.07)
<i>News Interest</i>	.08 (.03)	.07 (.07)	.09 (.06)	.05 (.05)
<i>Female</i>	-.06 (.03)	-.01 (.06)	-.06 (.06)	-.07 (.05)
<i>White</i>	-.01 (.04)	.09 (.07)	.03 (.07)	-.10 (.05)
<i>Age (18-92)</i>	-.32 (.00)	-.33 (.00)	-.31 (.00)	.32 (.00)
<i>Family Income (<\$10k->\$500k)</i>	.20 (.01)	.19 (.01)	-.18 (.01)	-.23 (.01)
<i>Pseudo R²</i>	.28	.30	.39	.26
<i>N</i>	952	312	326	314

NOTE: Equations are binary probit models, with probit coefficients converted to percentage-point differences in the probability of perceiving protest as legitimate, associated with minimum-to-maximum increases in each independent variable.

As for the effects across the experimental treatments? As the second through fourth results columns demonstrate, the effects were generally similar to those in the appropriateness models, but with one very notable exception: in the control condition, SDO for the first time failed to reveal the strongest predictive capacity. Its effect-size (.19) is statistically indistinguishable from authoritarianism (.20), and it fails to achieve statistical significance (whereas authoritarianism does). This predictive slack in the control group appears to have been picked up by ideology and party

identification, both of which reveal stronger effects than is generally the case with respect to perceptions of either appropriateness or legitimacy—either in the full sample or the other treatment groups. More broadly, though, across the other conditions, SDO continues to be a very strong predictor of perceived protest legitimacy—stronger than any other explanatory variable.

Discussion

Political protest is important, not only because it is a constitutionally protected civil liberty but also because it can spark social and policy change. Likewise, it is important to understand the roots of mass support for political protest, such support contributes to the success or failure of individual protest movements. Alas, no extant scholarship has taken up this task since protest became an oft-used tool of conservatives as well as progressives.

In this paper, we have sought to begin filling that gap, starting with the potential influence of partisanship and ideology and the potential mechanisms that may underlie such influence. We examined how party identification and ideology interact with the ideological content of specific protest movements to account for mass perceptions of protest appropriateness and legitimacy. We found very strong support for the hypothesis that conservatives and Republicans are disproportionately predisposed to view protest negatively, even when the specific protest under being considered is for a conservative cause and even with an anti-government framing of the survey questions that if anything primes conservative sentiment. This finding represents the first evidence that the Right does indeed object disproportionately to protest behavior in principle, rather than simply objecting to the progressive causes that have previously served as the backdrop for investigations of this question.

Furthermore, we evaluated the relative predictive efficacy of six competing mechanisms that could hypothetically account for “red vs. blue” differences in protest attitudes: (1) *Authoritarianism*, (2) *Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)*, (3) *Education*, (4) *Traditionalistic Christian Religiosity*, (5) *Perceived*

Relative Deprivation, and (4) *Trust in Government*. We observed that SDO does the heaviest lifting, by far, with authoritarianism and education also serving as important mechanisms. The others appear to play little if any independent role. The explanatory power of SDO is a new finding; previous accounts had more or less assumed that conservative disdain for protest—if genuine—could be attributed to education, religious conviction or authoritarianism.

One important applied implication of these findings, if others can replicate them in different contexts and using other protest movements, is that protest movements of either ideological stripe may succeed less frequently when social dominance orientation, authoritarianism and cultural conservatism more generally is ascendant within the populace. The cultural Right appears less willing than the Left to sympathize with protests of any kind, so when there are more of them, protestors have a tougher row to hoe. When do these characteristics rise in prominence? When large numbers of people feel threatened – as they have in recent years by terrorism, economic stagnation, growing secularism, demographic displacement and rapid technological changes. Indeed, it is within this context of threat that *Black Lives Matter* has arisen. The movement is surely playing an important role in increasing liberal white awareness of police brutality and other types of continued discrimination, but it also may have contributed to the white racial backlash that fueled the popularity of Donald Trump in unexpected places like Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.¹⁶ Perhaps that would not have happened in less uncertain times.

Of course, the findings we have uncovered here need to be replicated in other contexts before any firm conclusions can be drawn. Also, the residual predictive power of party identification and ideology still needs to be explained. We encourage other scholars to continue this investigation.

¹⁶ This is not to minimize the movement, or to suggest in any way that it is failing. The movement may be playing an important role in increasing white awareness of police brutality and other dynamics, which may lead to significant changes in law enforcement practices over time. It is just worth recognizing that those important dynamics may be coming with a short-term electoral price.

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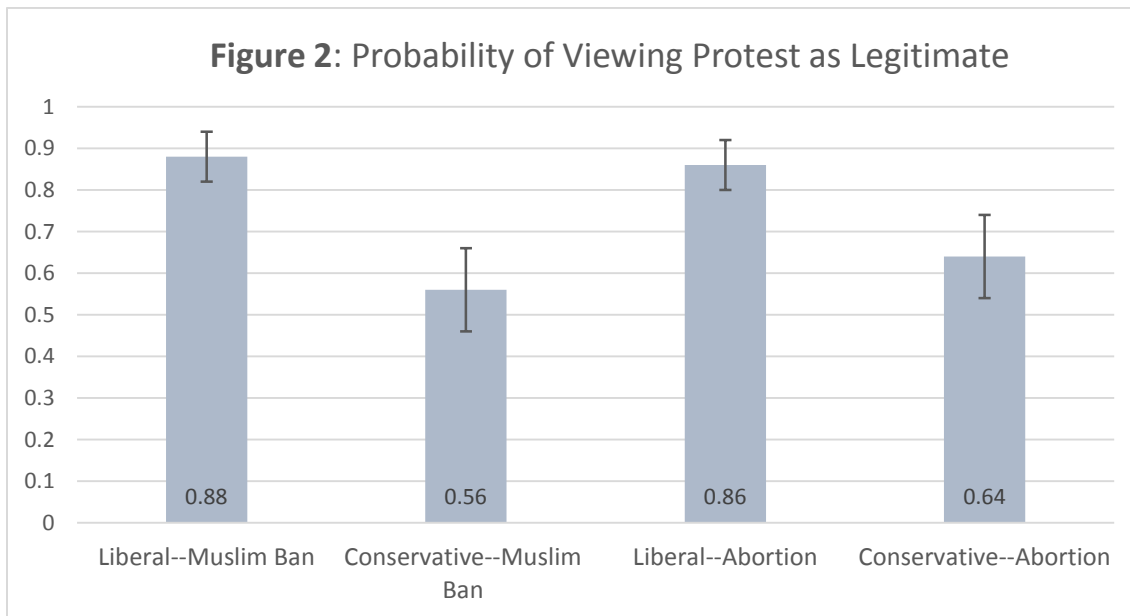
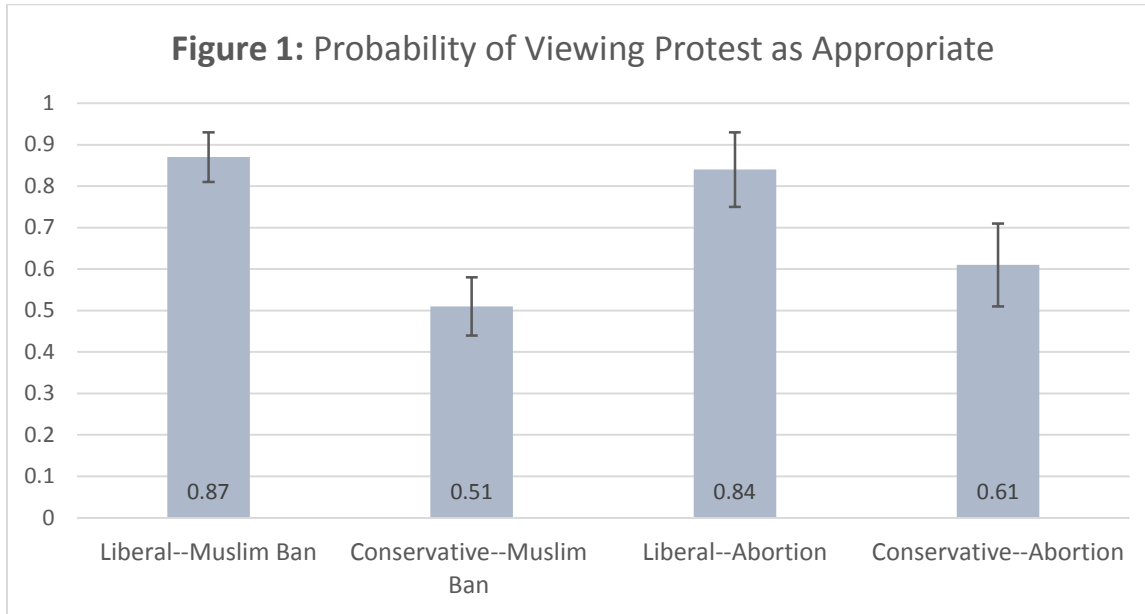
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Appendix

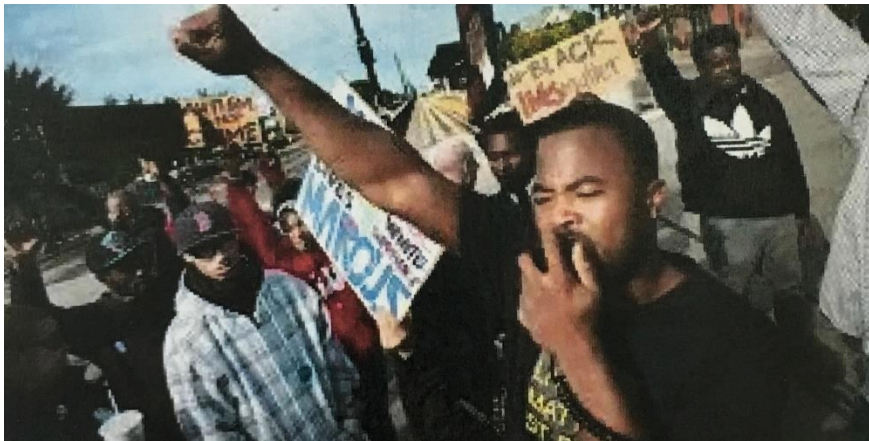


Supplementary Materials: Pilot Study

From February 23-29, 2016, we fielded an online survey experiment to a representative sample of Californians (n=725), using the *California Speaks (CALSPEAKS)* survey panel from the Institute for Social Research at California State University, Sacramento.¹⁷ We included sampling weights in our analysis.

To measure our dependent variable, *Perceived Protest Appropriateness*, the survey included the following question: “In the past year, we have seen several groups of citizens stage disruptive protests against what they see as misuse of government power. In your view, are such anti-government protests appropriate or inappropriate?” (0=inappropriate; 1=appropriate)

However, as respondents saw that question, they also saw one of two images. One randomized half of the sample saw an image of Black Lives Matter protestors:



¹⁷ For technical details regarding the *CALSPEAKS* panel, including sampling, weighting, and so on, see www.csus.edu/isr/calspeaks.

The other randomized half of the sample saw an image of Western ranchers at the 2016 standoff at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon (the Bundy family and followers)¹⁸:



We chose these images in order to maximize temporal proximity by using very recent events that were likely to be fresh in the minds of respondents. Though other protest groups, such as the Tea Party or Occupy Wall Street could have been used, they were no longer as prominent in the news at the time of the survey (at the end of February, 2016).¹⁹ Ultimately, any two examples would have been imperfect comparisons, but these represent concurrent active protest movements -- one on the left and one on the right. Furthermore, Google Trends analysis shows that there was more

¹⁸ This protest was an offshoot of the long-simmering “Sagebrush Rebellion” which denies the legitimacy of federal control of much of the land in western states. Ammon Bundy (son of 2014 Nevada standoff leader Cliven Bundy) led an occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in order to protest the jailing of ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond for arson. The Hammonds burned federal land on which they had leased grazing rights from the federal Bureau of Land Management. The occupation began January 2, 2016 and the standoff ended with the final four occupiers surrendering to the FBI on February 11, 2016.

¹⁹The Bundy led occupation of the federal wildlife refuge had been highly visible, especially in January of 2016, when the standoff was tense and prominent stories were featured in national newspapers like the Washington Post and New York Times, as well as on national television and radio. A Lexis-Nexis search revealed that in January and February of 2016, there were 711 (eliminating duplicate stories) newspaper and wire stories on the Bundy Oregon Standoff, and 1,449 Black Lives Matter stories. A Google trends analysis shows that the interest in the two topics over those months was steady, but on average, about double for BLM versus the Bundy stories. Both protests got significant, if not equal coverage at the time.

interest in the Bundy story in the West, making it perhaps more comparable for a California sample than if the survey had been administered east of the Mississippi.

Overall, without taking the experimental treatment into account, respondents were about equally likely to view antigovernment protests as appropriate or inappropriate ($\bar{x}=.51$), but somewhat less likely to support protest when they saw the image of the protestors at the wildlife refuge ($\bar{x}=.47$) than when they saw the image of Black Lives Matter ($\bar{x}=.55$). This difference is probably a function of our sample being collected in California, one of the “bluest” states in the nation.

We used binary probit regression to assess the degree to which this variance in such views can be accounted for by (a) the *Experimental Treatment* (0=exposure to the image of the Bundy protestors; 1=exposure to the image of Black Lives Matter protestors); (b) a measure of political identity (in successive models, either *Party Identification* [0-2; Republicans and Independents who lean Republican=2] or *Ideological Identification* [0-2; conservative=2]), and (c) an interaction term that multiplies the two.²⁰ We calculated our standard errors using the delta method (see Ai and Norton 2003), and clustered them according to the specific sampling method by which a given respondent had been recruited into the survey panel.

We also included several control variables in our models. Two of them are particularly noteworthy, because a legitimate criticism of our treatment is that the two images are asymmetric in terms of their provocativeness. For one thing, while it is obvious that the people in the *BLM* are protesting, that is not clear in the Rancher image. Second, unless one is at least somewhat politically

²⁰ As a robustness check, we used the full-range (four-point) dependent variable and estimated the model using ordinal probit regression. The substantive and statistical results are similar. Likewise, we also estimated alternate models in which we replaced the party/ideological identification measure with a variety of liberalism-conservatism indexes that we created using factor analysis, which were comprised of several different value priorities (e.g. Feldman 1988, Schwartz 1992, Jacoby 2006), “moral foundations” (e.g., Haidt 2012), and psychological dispositions (specifically, authoritarianism; e.g. Hetherington and Weiler 2009). The results across models are broadly similar. Here, we report the results from the binary probit models using partisan and ideological identification here because they are the simplest and therefore easiest to interpret.

sophisticated, one might not be familiar with either of the Bundy family federal land disputes that took place over the past few years. By contrast, just about everyone is familiar with African American civil rights protests, even if one is not fully familiar with *BLM*. Accordingly, we included a control variable for *Political Interest*.²¹

Furthermore, in addition to priming partisan or ideological affinities, the *BLM* image might prime racial anxieties among some respondents that is specific to young, African American men, and which is distinct from conservatism or even from social dominance orientation more broadly. Hence, we also included a control variable for *Racial Resentment*.

We rounded out the models with standard demographic controls for *Gender*, *Age*, *Race* (*White/Non-white*), *Latino/Hispanic Ethnicity*, *Family Income*, *Education*, and *Religiosity*. We provide the specific measures, coding, and summary statistics for all variables in the appendix.

Results

Table 1 displays the statistical results. To ease interpretation, we converted the probit coefficients to differences in the predicted probabilities of perceiving protest as appropriate, associated with full-range differences in the independent variables.²² As the table reveals, both Red and Blue Americans' attitudes toward protest are influenced by tribal partisan considerations. That is, partisans/ideologues of both stripes tend to be less likely to view protest as appropriate when the voices being raised are coming from the "other side of the aisle." However, partisan and ideological

²¹ In alternative models, also as a robustness check, we replaced *Political Interest* with a more sophisticated measure of *Mainstream News Consumption* – an index (created using factor analysis) of the number of days in the previous week that respondents reported having consuming political news through (a) newspapers (either print or online), (b) national network news, (c) local network news, (d) cable news, (e) *National Public Radio*, (f) political websites and blogs (e.g. *Politico*, *Vox*), and (g) social media (e.g. *Facebook*, *Twitter*). The results from these models do not differ significantly from those we report below. The exact question wording, eigenvalue and factor loadings are observable in the appendix.

²² The sample size reported in the table is lower than that reported above because we deleted missing cases from the analysis using the listwise method.

differences endure; Democrats and progressives are more likely to consider protest behavior to be appropriate than are Republicans or conservatives -- both by groups they like and groups they do not like.²³

²³ We also estimated simpler models, without the interaction term, which reveal that party ID and ideology are substantively meaningful and statistically significant predictors of protest attitudes, independent of the image one had been randomly assigned to see and the controls.

Table 1				
Accounting for the Variance in Mass Perceptions of Protest Legitimacy				
	Model 1		Model 2	
Independent Variables	dy/dx	P<	dy/dx	P<
Model 1:				
<i>Treatment Image: Rancher (0) or BLM (1)</i>	.23	.01	N/A	N/A
<i>Party ID (GOP=High)</i>	.03	.71	N/A	N/A
<i>Treatment * Party ID</i>	-.40	.03	N/A	N/A
Conditional Treatment Effects				
<i>Treatment, among Democrats</i>	.23	.01	N/A	N/A
<i>Treatment, among Republicans</i>	-.18	.05	N/A	N/A
Conditional PID Effects				
<i>PID, with Rancher Image</i>	.03	.71		
<i>PID, with BLM Image</i>	-.41	.01	N/A	N/A
Model 2:				
<i>Treatment: BLM (0) or Ranchers (1)</i>	N/A	N/A	.15	.04
<i>Ideology (Conservative High)</i>	N/A	N/A	-.08	.29
<i>Treatment * Ideology</i>	N/A	N/A	-.32	.07
Conditional Treatment Effects				
<i>Treatment, among Liberals</i>	N/A	N/A	.15	.04
<i>Treatment, among Conservatives</i>	N/A	N/A	-.15	.19
Conditional Ideology Effects				
<i>Ideology, if Rancher Image</i>	N/A	N/A	-.08	.29
<i>Ideology, if BLM Image</i>	N/A	N/A	-.38	.04
Controls				
<i>Racial Resentment</i>	-.14	.33	-.33	.11
<i>Political Interest</i>	-.05	.58	.11	.41
<i>Female</i>	-.14	.06	-.21	.02
<i>White</i>	.10	.10	.10	.17
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	.08	.43	.13	.28
<i>Age</i>	-.24	.12	-.13	.04
<i>Income</i>	.12	.39	.17	.26
<i>Education</i>	-.24	.02	-.21	.16
<i>Church Attendance</i>	.02	.79	.06	.32
Predicted Prob. (Y=1) at Means	.54		.54	
Pseudo R ²	.08		.09	
N=	502		483	
Equations are binary probit models, with probit coefficients converted to full-range differences in the probability of perceiving protest as appropriate, for full-range differences in each independent variable. For each model, we first present the main results, in which the interaction term reveals the change in each constitutive term coefficient for full range differences in the interaction. Then, we present the reveal the actual conditional effects for each constitutive term under each of the two conditions (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005, Berry Golder and Milton 2012).				

To get a better picture, Figures 1 and 2 display the relative probabilities of respondents indicating that protest behavior is “appropriate” across four conditions, among: (a) Democrats/progressives who saw the *Black Lives Matter* image, (b) Democrats/progressives who saw

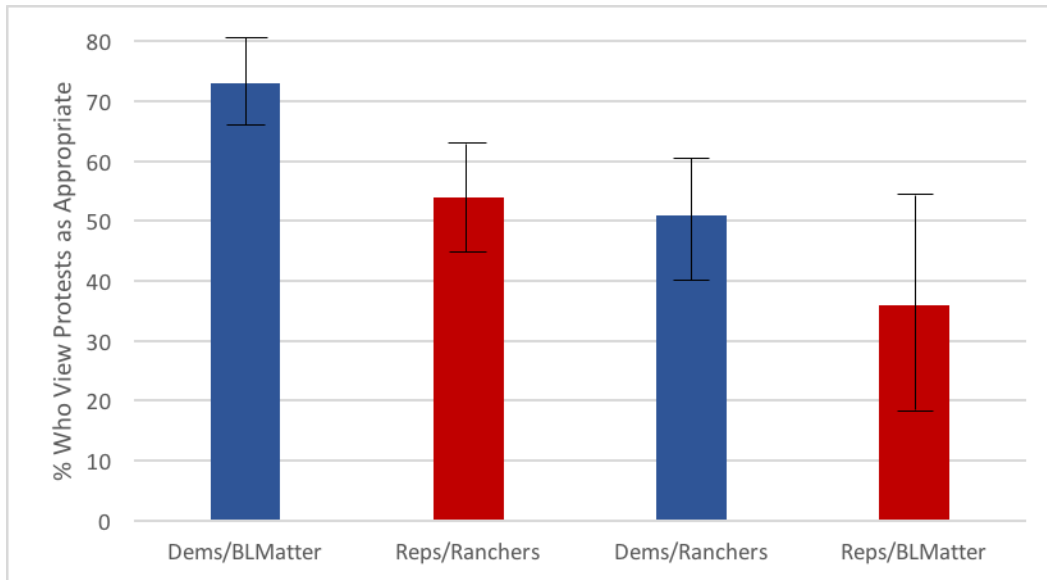
the Western Rancher protest image, (c) Republicans/conservatives who saw the Western rancher protest image, and (d) Republicans/conservatives who saw the *Black Lives Matter* image.²⁴

Focusing first on Figure 1, we see a clear pattern: the probability of Democrats viewing protest behavior as appropriate is .73 when they see a like-minded group (*Black Lives Matter*), and .51 when they see a group with whom they are less likely to relate (Western ranchers), a 22 percentage-point difference ($p < .01$). Among Republicans, the probability is .54 when prompted to think about a group of activists that they are inclined to support (Western ranchers), but only .36 when prompted to think about a group that they are less inclined to support (*Black Lives Matter*) – but this latter difference is not statistically significant.

Looking at the results another way, we see that Republicans tend to be about 21 points less likely than Democrats to see protest behavior as appropriate when each group is prompted to think about an activist cause that they probably support ($p < .05$). The difference is 15 percentage points when each group is prompted to think about an activist cause that they probably do not support, but this difference is not statistically significant. Finally, and perhaps the most strikingly, Democrats are nearly as inclined to support protest behavior by their opponents as Republicans are to support it by their friends.

Figure 1: Party Identification, Specific Protests, and Mass Perceptions of Protest Legitimacy

²⁴ We calculated full conditional effects using procedures outlined in Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006) and Berry, Golder and Milton (2012).



Looking now at Figure 2, we see that the substantive results are very similar, but the confidence intervals are larger. The probability of viewing protests favorably among those who identify as “progressive” is .71 when paired with the image of *Black Lives Matter* and .56 when paired with the image of Western ranchers, though this difference is not statistically significant. Among conservatives, the probabilities are .33 and .48, respectively, but again not statistically significant. Moreover, conservatives are 23 percentage points less likely than progressives to consider protest behavior appropriate when each group is primed to think about a cause they support ($p < .05$), and an identical 23 percentage points less likely when each group is primed to think about a cause they oppose (but the latter difference is not statistically significant). And again, in this model, liberals are roughly equally likely to support protests by their opponents as conservatives are by their friends. Substantively, they (liberals) are actually more likely to offer support for their opponents, but this difference is not statistically significant). The takeaway point here is that liberals who see an image of *Black Lives Matter* are quite a bit more likely to support protest behavior than are any of the other groups, the differences among those other groups being statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Figure 2: Ideology, Specific Protests, and Mass Perceptions of Protest Legitimacy

