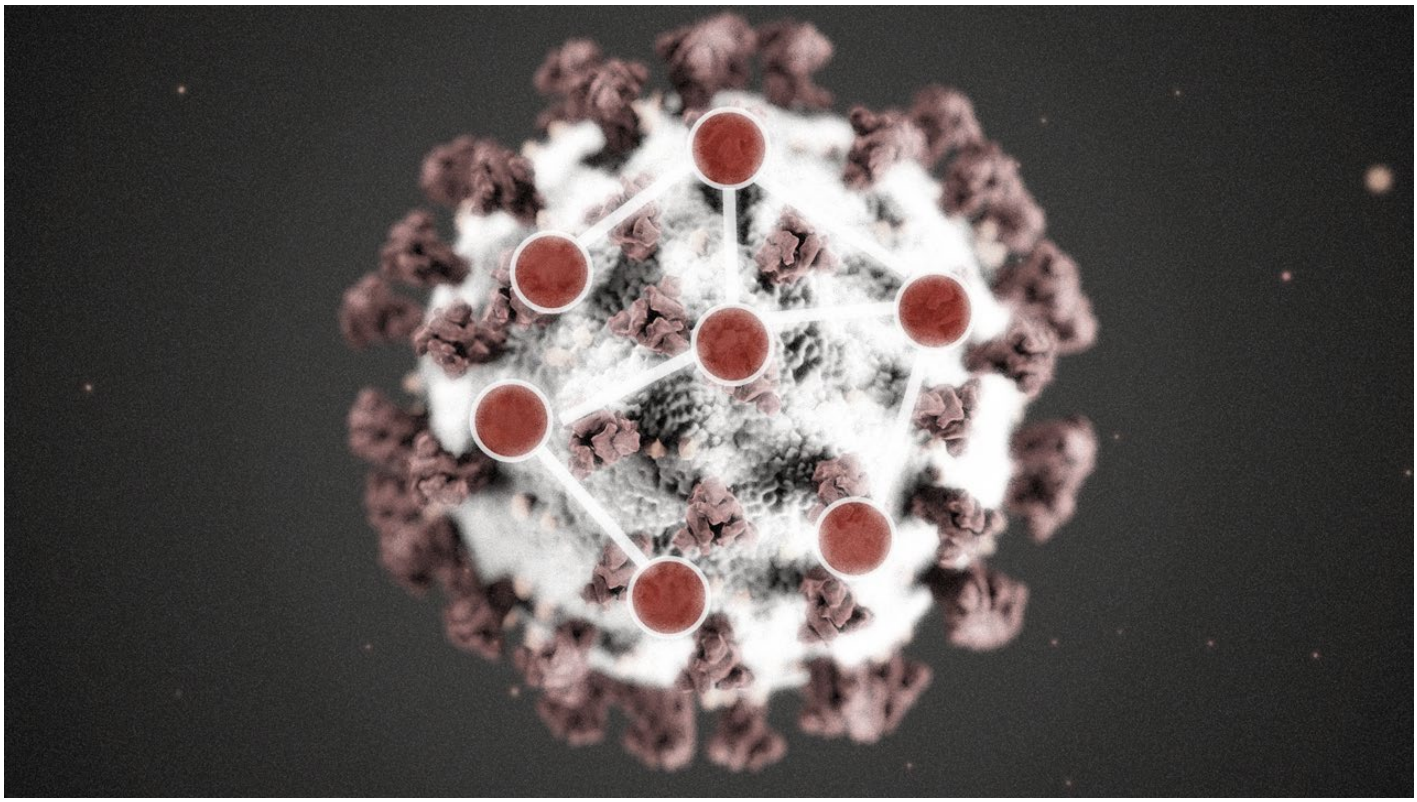

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THE STATE OF THE NATION:
A 50-STATE COVID-19 SURVEY
REPORT #10: THE PANDEMIC AND THE PROTESTS

USA, August 2020

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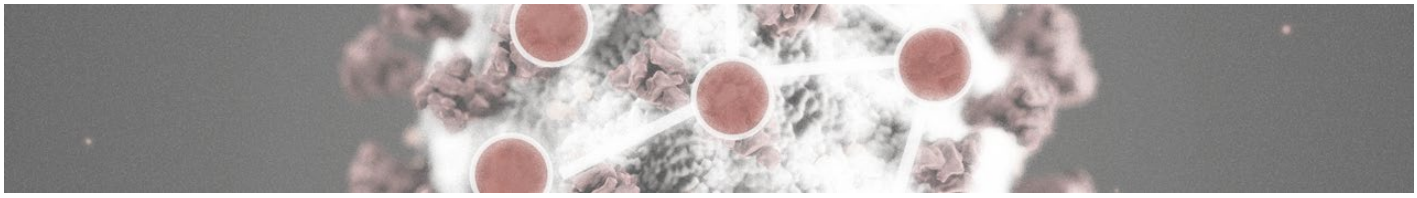

Report of August 10, 2020, v.1

***From*:** The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States

A joint project of:
Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

Authors: David Lazer (Northeastern University); Mauricio Santillana (Harvard Medical School); Roy H. Perlis (Harvard Medical School); Katherine Ognyanova (Rutgers University); Matthew A. Baum (Harvard University); James Druckman (Northwestern University); Alexi Quintana (Northeastern University); John Della Volpe (Harvard University); Hanyu Chwe (Northeastern University); and Matthew Simonson (Northeastern University)

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COVER MEMO

Summary Memo— August 10, 2020

The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States
Partners: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

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In June and July 2020, we conducted two waves of a large, 50-state survey, some results of which are presented here. You can find previous reports online at www.covidstates.org.

Note on methods:

In June and July 2020, we surveyed 37,325 individuals across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The two survey waves used in this report were conducted on 12-28 June and 10-26 July 2020 by PureSpectrum via an online, nonprobability sample, with state-level representative quotas for race/ethnicity, age, and gender (for methodological details on the other waves, see covidstates.org). In addition to balancing on these dimensions, we reweighted our data using demographic characteristics to match the U.S. population with respect to race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and living in urban, suburban, or rural areas. This was part of a project including a series of large-scale surveys we have been conducting since April 2020, examining attitudes and behaviors regarding COVID-19 in the United States.

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Or visit us at www.covidstates.org.

The pandemic and the protests

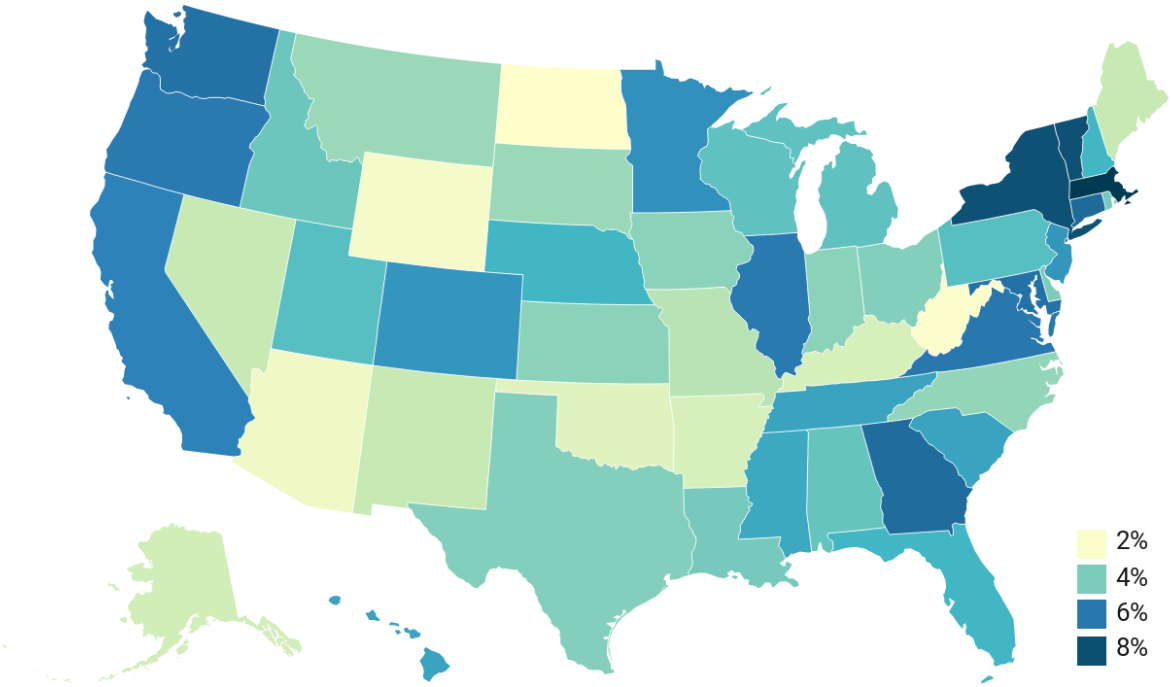
The spring and early summer of 2020 witnessed historically large protests against racism and police violence, as well as a surge of COVID-19 in parts of the country that had not been hit hard by the pandemic earlier. In this report, we evaluate the scale of the protests, the question of whether and to what extent the pandemic might have created favorable conditions for the protests to occur, and what the correlation is between the scale of the protests in particular states and the subsequent spread of COVID-19.

How many protested

Our data, from a survey with 37,325 respondents across two waves conducted from June 12 to 28 and July 10 to 26, indicate that a remarkable 4.9% of U.S. adults report participating in protests against racism and/or police violence. Figure 1 presents a map indicating the hot spots for protests around the country (see Table 1 on p.12 for detailed statistics on protest participation broken down by state).

Figure 1. Protest attendance by state

[Percent respondents who reported attending protests against racism and/or police violence]



National sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20-6/28/20 and 7/10/20-7/26/20

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org
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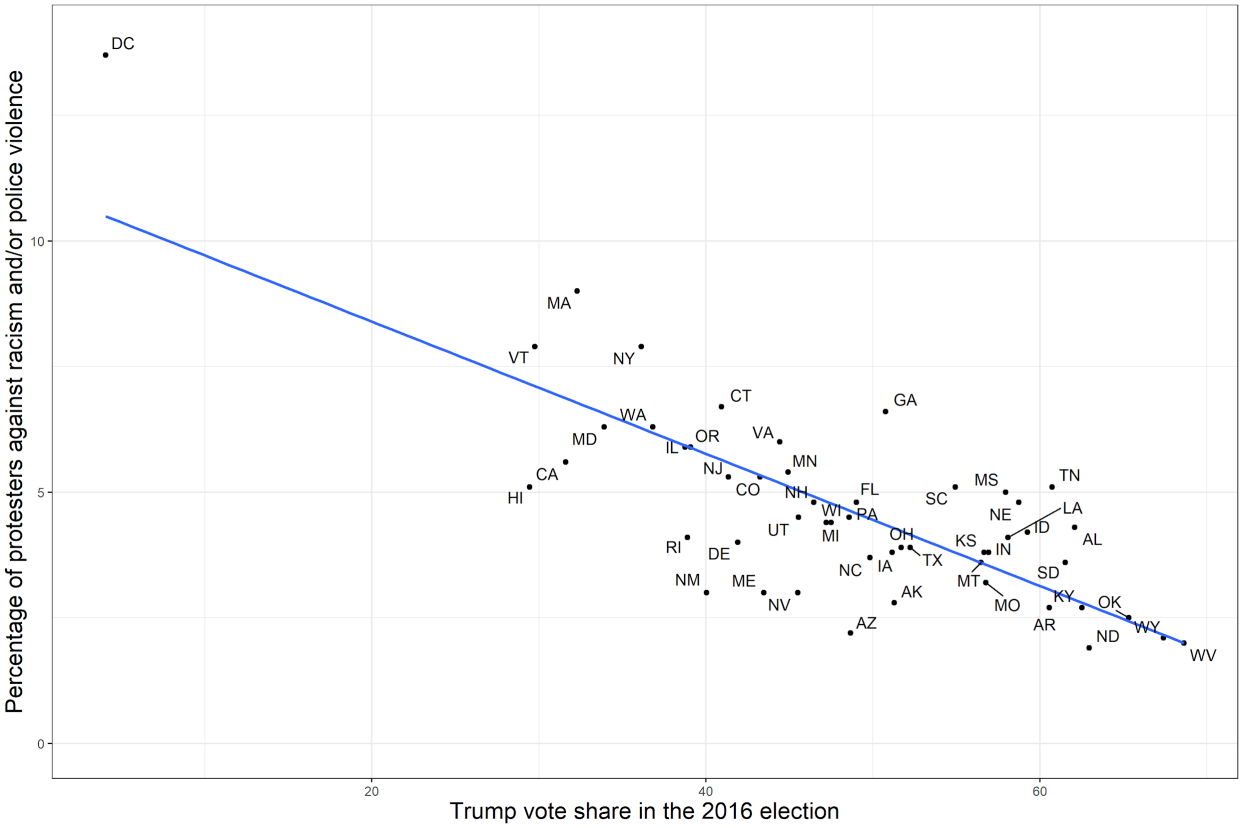
These data indicate two important takeaways:

- **The protests were massive and truly national in scope.** Even the states with the lowest protest participation rates, such as North Dakota, West Virginia, and Wyoming, had about 2% of adults report participating.
- **The rate of participation was strongly negatively correlated with Trump vote share in 2016.** We show a scatterplot of reported protest participation rate against Trump vote share in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Reported participation in protests against racism and/or police violence, plotted against Trump vote share, by state



National Sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20 - 6/8/20 and 7/10/20 - 7/26/20)

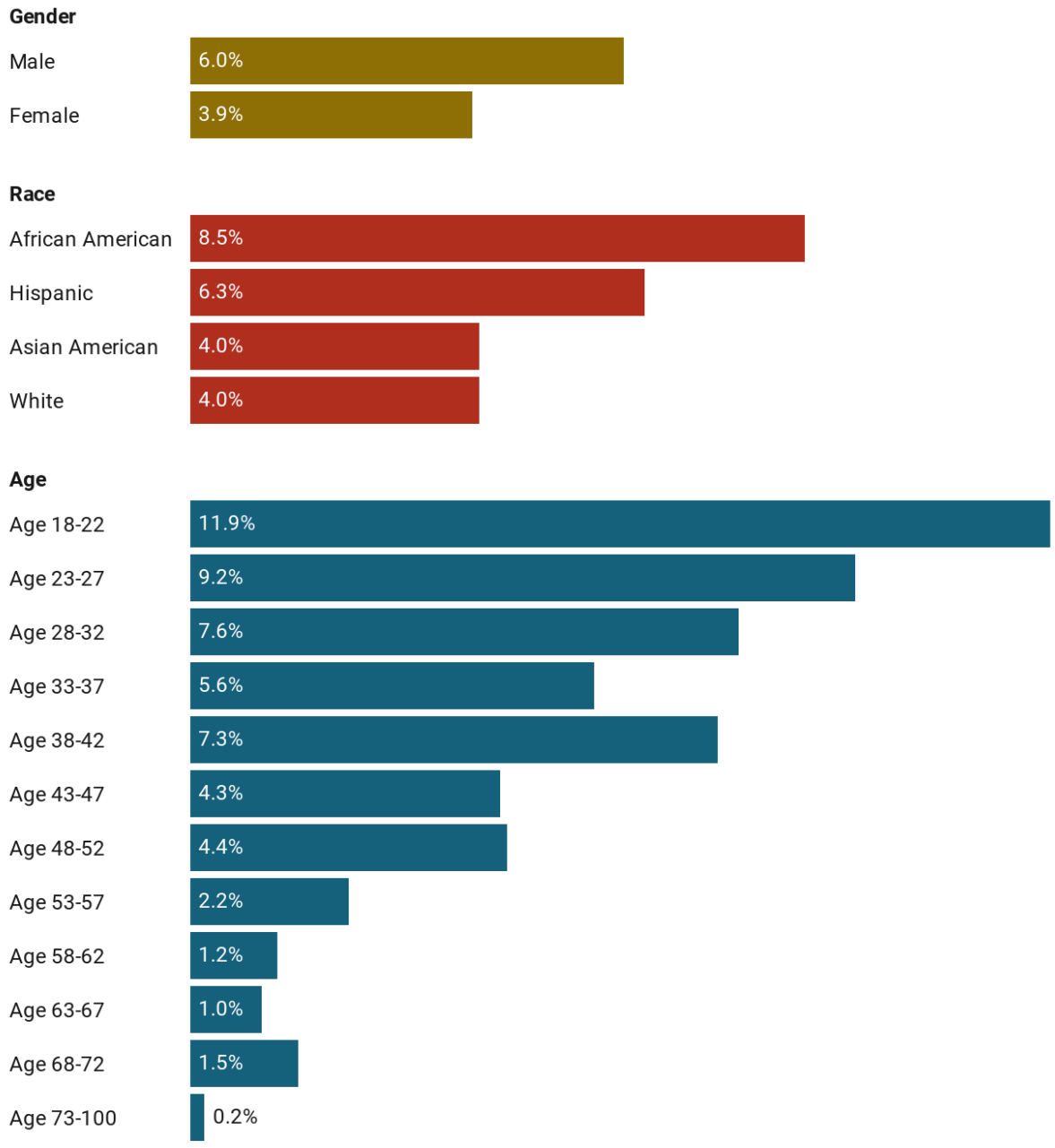
Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org

2016 vote share source: MIT Election Data and Science Lab, 2017, "U.S. President 1976–2016", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/42MVDX

Figure 3 plots the percentage of different racial groups, gender groups, and age groups that participated in the protests.

Figure 3. Protest attendance and demographics

[Percent respondents who reported attending protests against racism and/or police violence]



National sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20-6/28/20 and 7/10/20-7/26/20)

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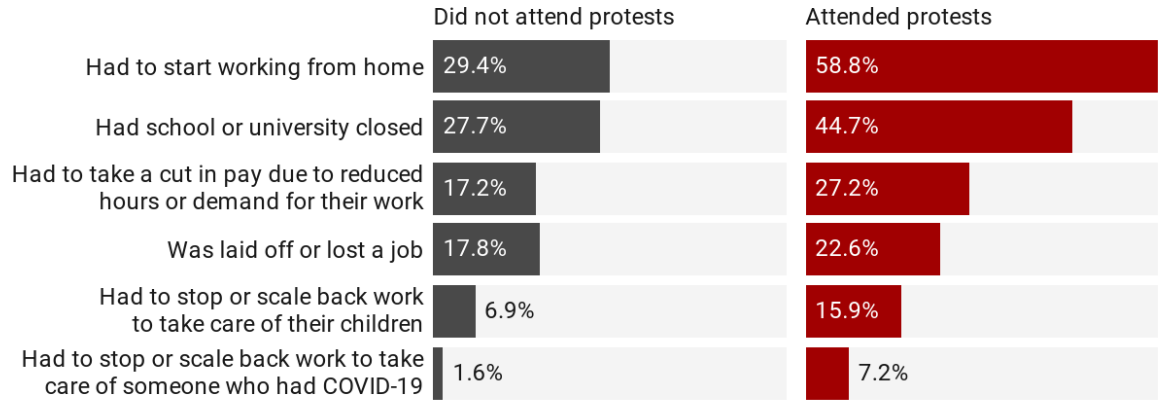
African Americans report participating in the protests at higher rates than other racial or ethnic groups; however, overall the majority of protesters were white. More dramatic is the steep age gradient of reported participation in the protests, ranging from 11.9% of the youngest cohort surveyed (age 18-22), to 0.2% of adults over age 73. This may in part reflect that protesters in general tend to tilt younger; and is likely accentuated by the greater risk that the pandemic poses to older Americans in terms of potential hospitalization and mortality. At the younger end of the scale, it might also reflect the fact that many college students were not in classes or in summer jobs/internships due to the pandemic, and thus had more time available than would otherwise be the case.

Figure 4. COVID-19 challenges and protest participation

Have you or someone in your household experienced any of the following as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak? [Percent of respondents among those who did (did not) report protesting against racism and/or police violence]



National sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20-6/28/20 and 7/10/20-7/26/20)

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org
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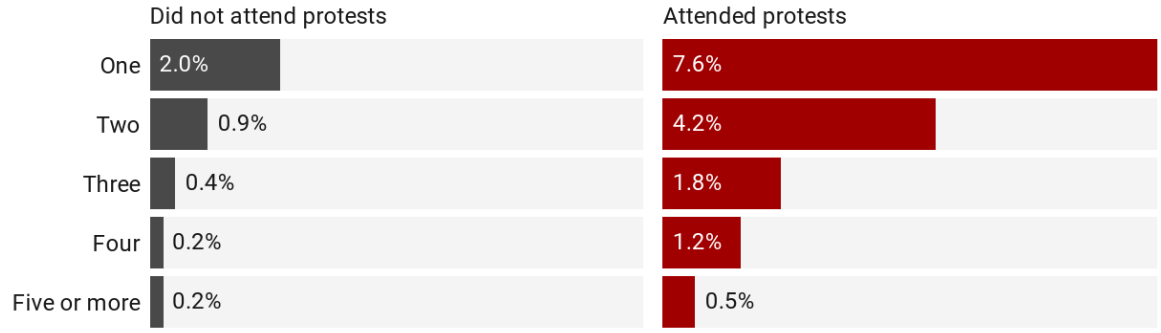
There is a strong relationship between the extent to which COVID-19 disrupted individuals' lives and whether they report participating in the protests. Protesters were four times as likely to report having someone in their household who had been diagnosed with COVID-19 (15.2% versus 3.8%).

Protesters were also far more likely to have had someone in their household start working from home, had their school/university closed, had to scale back their work due to childcare issues or to take care of someone who was infected with COVID-19, suffered a cut in pay, or been laid off (see Figure 4).

Figure 5. COVID-19 in the household and protest participation

How many members of your household (other than yourself) have been diagnosed by a medical professional with coronavirus (COVID-19)? [Percent of respondents among those who did (did not) report protesting against racism and/or police violence]



National sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20-6/28/20 and 7/10/20-7/26/20)

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org
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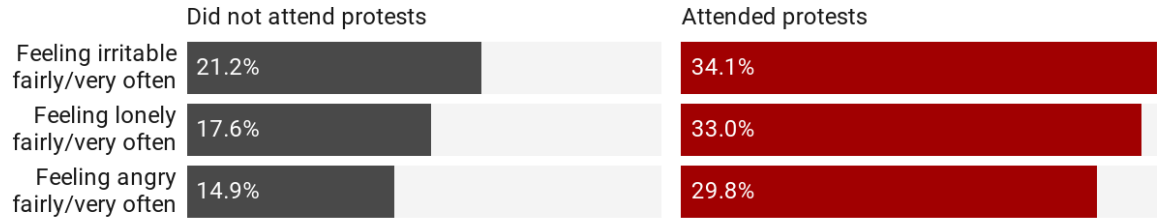
Protesters more often reported feeling stressed (average of 6.7 versus 5.7 on a 10 point scale). They were also more likely to report feeling lonely (33.0% of protestors feeling lonely fairly or very often versus 17.6% of non-protestors), and angry (29.8% feeling angry fairly or very often versus 14.9%)[1]. Protesters were more likely to be very concerned about losing their jobs (38.2% versus 20.8%), being able to receive healthcare (34.8% versus 21.7%), and financial hardships (44.9% versus 30.8%), among other differences (Figure 7). This level of disruption and stress may have provided a unique combination of emotional impetus and flexibility to participate in the protests.

Figure 6. Emotional state and protest participation

In the last week, how often did you feel... [Percent of respondents among those who did (did not) report protesting against racism and/or police violence who said "fairly often" or "very often"]



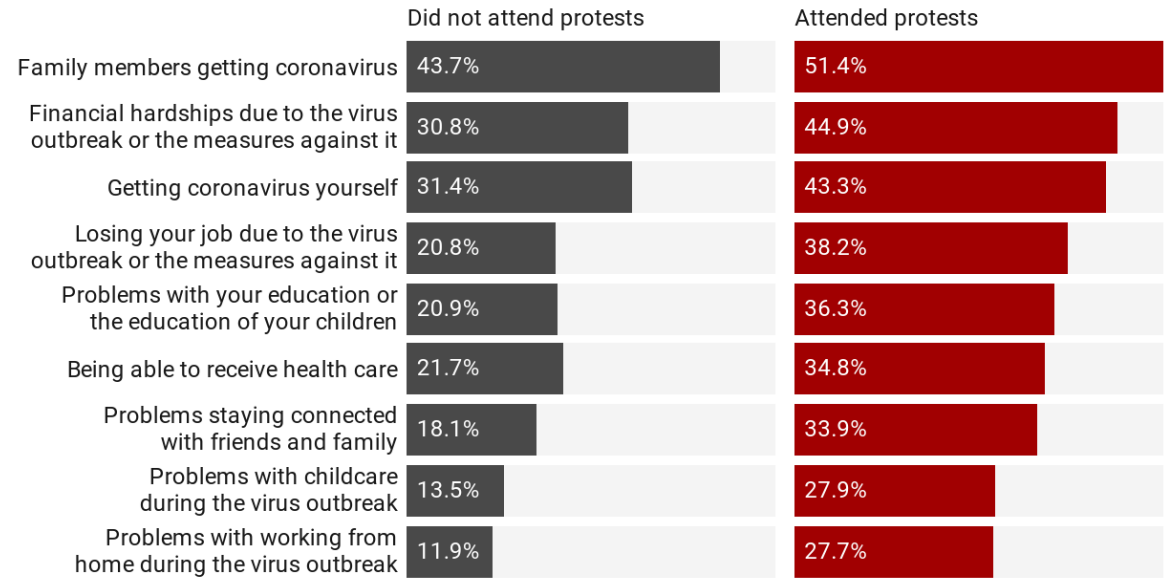
National sample, N = 21,720, Time period: 6/12/2020-6/28/2020

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org
• Created with Datawrapper

[1] We only asked respondents about anger and loneliness between June 12 and June 28.

Figure 7. Concerns about COVID-19 and protest participation

How concerned, if at all, do you currently feel about the following...
[Percent of respondents among those who did (did not) report protesting against racism and/or police violence who said they were "very concerned"]



National sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20-6/28/20 and 7/10/20-7/26/20)

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org
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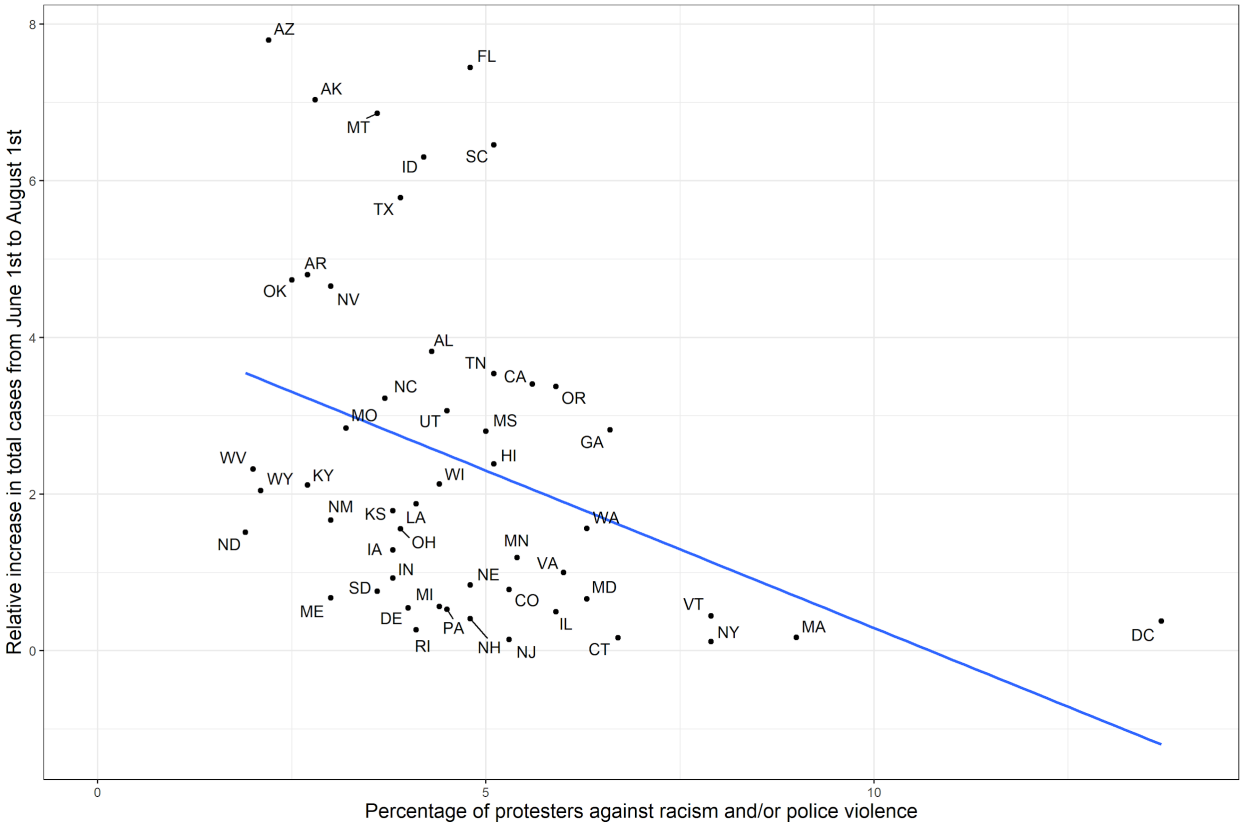
The pandemic

One concern is whether the protests played a role in the surge of cases in the United States since June 1. The proximity of such large numbers of people could plausibly increase the number of transmission events. However, the emerging science on transmission of COVID-19 highlights the role of *indoor* proximity. Thus, for example the World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges the potentially important transmission pathway of infection via aerosolized particles, where individuals can be infected in indoor spaces with poor ventilation where infected people have been present. As such, it is possible that proximity outdoors might not have a major impact on spread.[2] A full evaluation of this question is beyond the scope of this report. However, we can evaluate whether COVID-19 cases surged more in states with greater protest participation. Figure 8 plots the relative increase in the number of cases between June 1 and August 1 against the percentage of respondents in each state who reported participating in protests.

[2] See: https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/transmission-of-sars-cov-2-implications-for-infection-prevention-precautions and https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016041202031254X

Figure 8. Relative increase in total COVID-19 cases from June 1 to August 1, plotted against participation in protests, by state



National Sample, N = 37,325 (6/12/20 - 6/8/20 and 7/10/20 - 7/26/20)

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org

COVID-19 cases data source: The New York Times, at github.com/nytimes/covid-19-data

There is a clear and significant *negative* correlation between the percentage of a state's population who reported protesting and the subsequent increase in cases of COVID-19. Thus, for example, Washington D.C., which had by far the highest reported participation rates in the protests at 13.7%, had a relatively low increase in cases during this period. A fuller analysis -- again, beyond the scope of this report -- requires incorporation of the various factors that have driven the surge of cases the last two months, such as changes in mobility and adherence to health guidelines (such as mask wearing) by the broader population in each state, and a variety of state policies. For example, our data also indicate that individuals in states with higher levels of protests also had higher levels of compliance with mask wearing (Figure 9).

In any case, it is hard to square the negative correlation between the percentage of the state population that participated in protests and the change in new cases with the proposition that the protests were a major driver of the recent surge in cases in the United States.

Figure 9. Adherence to mask wearing guidelines, plotted against participation in protests, by state

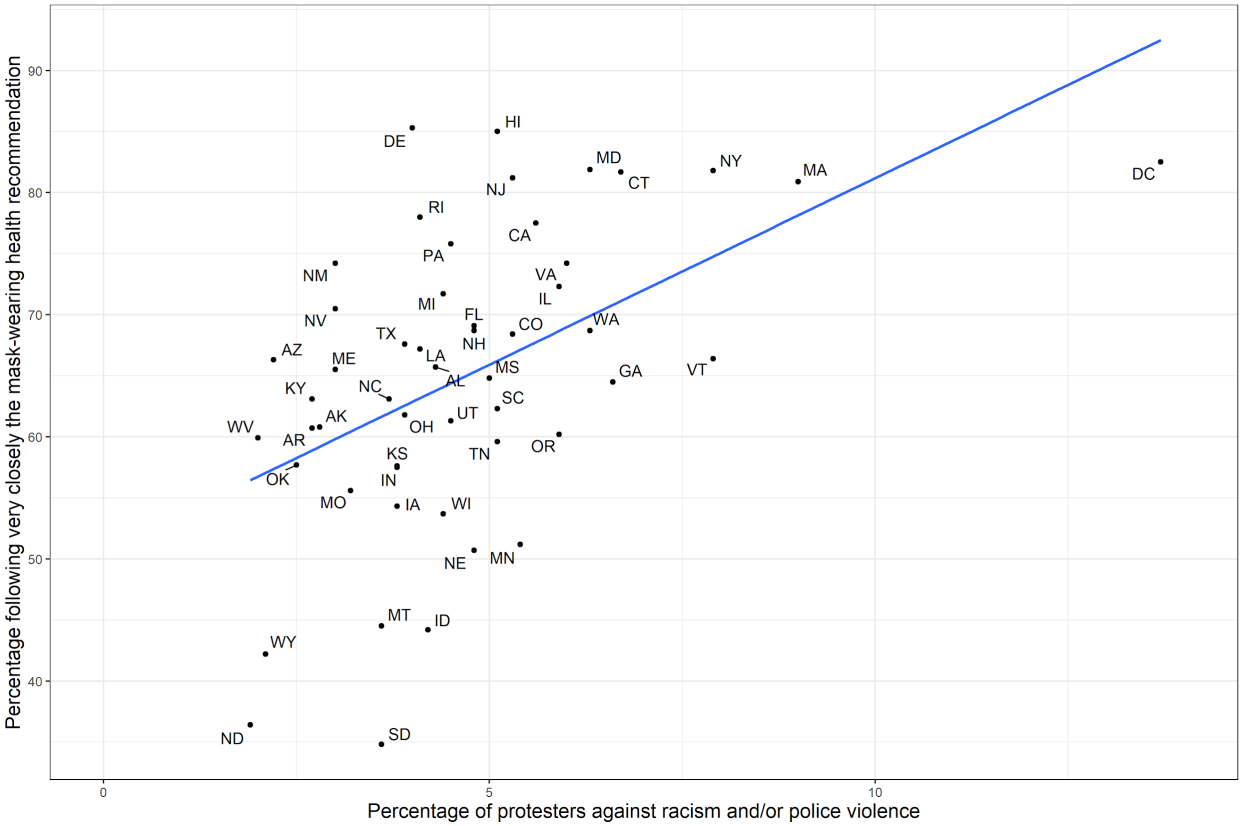


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Table 1. Proportion of respondents that report participating in protests about racism and/or police violence.

State	Proportion	Error Margin	N
National	4.9	0.3	37,325
AK	2.8	1.7	254
AL	4.3	1.9	773
AR	2.7	1.2	707
AZ	2.2	1.4	849
CA	5.6	1.6	1222
CO	5.3	1.9	752
CT	6.7	2.0	742
DC	13.7	3.1	500
DE	4.0	2.1	573
FL	4.8	1.4	1208
GA	6.6	2.0	856
HI	5.1	2.3	669
IA	3.8	1.7	751
ID	4.2	2.0	652
IL	5.9	1.7	902
IN	3.8	1.5	724

KS	3.8	1.7	656
KY	2.7	1.2	750
LA	4.1	2.0	737
MA	9.0	2.3	758
MD	6.3	2.0	823
ME	3.0	1.3	628
MI	4.4	1.6	751
MN	5.4	1.7	783
MO	3.2	1.5	779
MS	5.0	2.2	664
MT	3.6	1.8	528
NC	3.7	1.4	882
ND	1.9	1.3	345
NE	4.8	1.9	661
NH	4.8	1.7	629
NJ	5.3	1.9	791
NM	3.0	2.0	563
NV	3.0	1.7	745
NY	7.9	2.0	1001
OH	3.9	1.3	948
OK	2.5	1.4	668

OR	5.9	2.0	742
PA	4.5	1.5	965
RI	4.1	1.7	530
SC	5.1	2.1	812
SD	3.6	2.0	495
TN	5.1	1.9	860
TX	3.9	1.2	1227
UT	4.5	1.6	740
VA	6.0	1.7	893
VT	7.9	3.4	363
WA	6.3	2.1	780
WI	4.4	1.4	803
WV	2.0	1.1	624
WY	2.1	1.8	267