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Understanding The Problem Of People Of Color: Does Systemic Racism Explain The Protest Frequency Across The United States?

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Abstract: Since the 2020 killing of George Floyd, an African American, police brutality against unarmed Black males and females has achieved sustained attention around the problem of racial disparities. The Black Lives Matter Movement 2020, expressed in anti-racism civil rights protests, has become a response to racial injustice. The core goal of this paper is to test whether the frequency of protests against racial oppression is driven by structural racism at the state level within the United States between 2017 and 2020, while shedding some light on the Trump administration. In this study, the quantitative research analysis is being used to run a multiple linear regression that looks at the anti-racism protest activity in 50 American states. I argue that structural racism is an autonomous grievance that accumulates institutionalized racial disparities and, in addition to grievances from different domains, significantly affects the frequency of occurring anti-racism protests.

Key words: systemic racism, contentious political tactics, racial oppression, anti-racism protests

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, racial disparities for African Americans have been on rise. Key areas of society such as education, labor, housing, political power, wealth and criminal justice demonstrate a racially-biased dynamic. Precisely, African Americans experience disproportionate suspension in schools and colleges being 6 times more likely dismissed compared to their white peers.[2] The unemployment rate among Black people accounts for 16.8 percent in comparison with 12.4 percent and 15 percent for White and Asian people respectively.[3] The problem of income inequality is present among blacks where the African American median household income is equal to $40,258 while for Hispanic this accounts for $50,486, and $68,145 - for White.[4] Similarly, the African American poverty rate is 21.2 percent that doubles the White rate of poverty (8.7 percent).[5] In terms of housing, the homeownership rate for African Americans is the lowest within the country, and comprises 44 percent as opposed to 73.7 percent for White people, 48.9 percent for Hispanic, and 56 percent for all other races.[6] Political representation reflects racial inequalities if one compares the Senate where the Black political leadership is represented by three Black senators only whereas the House of Representatives has 52 members.[7] Within criminal justice, Black males are more likely to be incarcerated, 5.9 times the rate for whites.[8] According to the Mapping Police Violence Project database, African Americans are 28 percent of those who were killed by the police in spite of only 13 percent of the population in 2020.[9]

The racial oppression over African Americans at economic, political or legislative structures tends to be associated with systemic or institutionalized racism that is based on unequal access to resources, rights and benefits and embedded through laws, policies and practices within those governmental institutions (Jones, 2000). Most scholar discussions prefer to apply systemic racism for explaining disproportionate fatal shootings against African Americans both at state and city levels (Mesic, 2018; Siegel, 2020; Wong and Bernstein, 2020). What's more, police homicides of unarmed Black victims was studied as a grievance that

[2] National Center for Education Statistics (2017-2018)
[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics (May, 2020)
[4] U.S. Census Bureau (2017)
[5] U.S. Census Bureau (2017)
[6] U.S. Census Bureau (2020)
[7] Congressional Research Service based on the U.S. Census Bureau population estimates (2019)
[8] U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2016 (January, 2018)
[9] *See* the Mapping Police Violence Project (2013-2021) https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/aboutthedata

causes the protest frequency, claiming that protests against racial oppression are more likely to happen in the localities where security forces have killed more African Americans per capita (Williamson and Trump, 2018).

The occurrence of protest activity is based on a grievance approach. Grievances are generated by inequalities including uneven power concentration, wealth distribution and discrimination against minorities (Tilly, 2003). The recent police brutality death of George Floyd (2020) has become a catalyst for an increased number of protests against persistent racial oppression, especially in the criminal justice system. This event illustrates how grievances develop a collective sense of injustice or insurgent consciousness that motivates populations to perform protests as a salient political force (Meyer, 1998). Originally, protests against racial disparities were associated with Black Lives Matter Movement that started in 2013 as a reaction towards a police shooting killing of Trayvon Martin (Cobb, 2016). For this reason, there are a plethora of scholars (Williamson and Trump, 2018; Richardson, 2015; Reynolds-Stenson, 2018; Leach and Allen, 2017) who look at protest activity between 2013 and 2015 while focusing on racial disparities from the standpoint of racial police violence where it serves as the main trigger for protesting.

However, political, economic or social deprivations of minority rights are not enough to separately explain the occurring protest activity against racial oppression (McAdam, 1999; Goldstone 1991; Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2017). While evaluating scholar works on racial inequality and rising protest activity around it, this paper suggests that systemic racism as a cumulative factor can, separately from existing grievances, explain the frequency of occurring anti-racism protests at the state level between 2017 and 2020. Thus, this study extends on the previous empirical literature by assessing different time contexts in which the protest activity happened. The core goal of this paper is to find a cause-and-effect relationship between systemic racism as an autonomous grievance and the frequency of anti-racism protests happening statewise. For this reason, I formulate a research question for this study:

Does systemic racism explain the frequency of anti-racism protests across the United States between 2017 and 2020 within the Trump administration?

By answering this motivating question, this paper contributes to fill the gap in the existing literature regarding systemic racial disparities and political participation. Theoretically, this is an expansion on the previous scholar's research because the paper determines systemic racism

as a cumulative indicator/grievance that autonomously explains the motives of occurring protests, going beyond the violence component only, namely, the fatal police shootings by security forces that is usually considered as the major trigger for civic resistance. Empirically, this paper reports the relationship between the structural racism index and the frequency of anti-racism protests at the state level for 50 states across the United States of America from January 21, 2017 to December 31, 2020. Additionally, it develops an updated dataset of protests against racial disparities, while merging it with demographic as well as political, social and economic data of structural racism. This study applies a quantitative method of research analysis while running a multiple linear regression for analyzing the anti-racism protest activity at the state level with 50 observations (states) and 8 859 anti-racism protests being captured during the period from 2017 and 2020.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Contentious political tactics are "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, in which governments appear either as targets or initiators of claims" (Tilly, 2008). The case of Black Lives Matter protests demonstrates that claimants target the structures of the criminal justice system where police violence is the reason for contention. There appears to be political and social disconnect that results in a public protest (Piven and Cloward, 1979). The participants perform a collective action that is not only an instrumental response to a particular situation (in this case, police violence against the Black community) but also an activity that engages a high level of "emotional investment" - rage or frustration due to the racial injustice occurring (Melucci, 1996). Eisinger (1973) studied the psychology behind the protest behavior while testing why the intensity of riots regarding poverty and race in American cities varies through time and space (Eisinger, 1973). The findings showed that protest activity that involves Black people lasts longer and is large in scale as it becomes a major tactic in political participation when the participants are able to express their grievances (Eisinger, 1973). This theoretical discourse completes the gap about the motivation of populations to protest, it is driven by the grievance-based approach.

While focusing this research on the United States, it is important to mention that the U.S. society contains the identity-based deprivations, particularly, by race, that shape a grievance-level framework and racial disorder frequency (Morgan and Clark, 1973). The grievance-level model within racially diverse society is not new, it explains the disorder severity on a

satisfactory level (Morgan and Clark, 1973). Morgan and Clark (1973) received statistically significant results on testing grievances among African Americans at the city-level where the more widespread black grievances are, the more severe the disorder might be if it occurs. The authors tested "the underlying level of frustration" through racial inequality in housing and low status employment that affect the grievance level in American cities (Morgan and Clark, 1973). However, the variables of housing or employment should determine community conditions. The worse the community conditions in the cities, the higher the level of grievances and the greater they affect the frequency and severity of protests or occurring disorders. Morgan and Clark (1973) came to the conclusion that cities with higher levels of grievances among black population have more frequent disorders. Nevertheless, there is still a gap in understanding why some cities vary in their level of grievances among African Americans and what determines the difference in community conditions, in this case. Especially, considering the fact that grievances go beyond the areas of housing or jobs and include a wider spectrum of structures.

After clarifying the mechanism of grievances, it is essential to understand what causes inequalities in communities as well as in American states as a territorial unit within a racially diverse U.S. society. I would like to refer to the theory of structural injustice that argues that "social processes put large categories of individuals under a systematic threat of deprivation" (Young, 2011). In other words, if one considers the United States, then the aforementioned "categories of people" belong to racial groups that are, indeed, "put at a disadvantage in a relation to an institutionalized racial majority" (Jones, 1997). What stands behind this procedure? The literature defines it as institutional racism or:

> The operating policies, properties, and functions of an on-going system of normative patterns which serve to subjugate, oppress, and force dependence of individuals or groups by establishing and sanctioning unequal goals, objectives, and priorities for blacks and whites, and sanctioning inequality in status as well as in access to goods and services (Jones, 1974, p. 219).

The previous definition emphasizes the existence of systemic policies and practices which proves how much institutionalized the racial inequalities are. However, to put the framework on how the structural racism works and which structures are involved in it, I refer to the definition and research by Rose (2015):

> Structural racism is the normalization and legitimation of an array of historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal dynamics that routinely advantage whites

> while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Interlocking gears of structural racism represent key areas of society: housing, education, wealth, employment and criminal justice where structural racism is highly dynamic and consequential (Rose, 2015).

The given theoretical discourse regarding systemic racism links existing racial disparities with violated community conditions within cities, counties and states. To illustrate, Mesic (2018) studied the relationship between structural racism and the racial bias in the fatal police shootings at the state level, and the findings showed that structural racism anticipates the racial disparity in the police shootings. Similarly, Siegel (2020) empirically analyzes the linkage between structural racism and police violence against African Africans with results that reflect that structural racism is a catalyst of excessive police force and differs significantly across cities and states with a pattern of racial residential segregation. Thus, if neighborhoods experience racial disparities in police violence, then it violates the safe conditions of the community. The more these conditions are violated, the greater the level of grievance related to the criminal justice structure.

On a closer inspection, community conditions do not consist of only security forces practices but based on a set of institutions or policies or a system that is designed to reproduce inequalities while creating (1) interdependent (2) interactive and (3) compounding issues that go across institutions and social spheres (Rose, 2015). For this reason, it is difficult to identify what, particularly, causes disconnect or further contention in the form of disorders or protests. Namely, Williamson and Trump (2018) study the context of Black Lives Matter protests where they claim that "security apparatus affects political activity in the United States" and this explains why Black Lives Matter protests are more likely to occur in those locations where "police have previously killed more Black people per capita" (Williamson and Trump, 2018). On the one hand, the results confirm in the territorial units where the most community conditions are violated through the fatal police shootings, the greater level of grievance it shapes for individuals to protest against racial injustice. On the other hand, the criminal justice system does not function separately as an institution. Security forces while using their power of discretion to justify the excessive force can also perform the arranged unreasonable police traffic stops and arrests against Black people that are accompanied with violence and end up with a felon disenfranchisement. This fact shows the further political exclusion as well as social exclusion that might also drive grievances and motivate protest in those localities where the greatest number of not only shootings but also police checks and arrests occur.

While discussing advantages and disadvantages of the existing scholar contribution, this paper identifies the unclarity in the literature on racial injustice and political activity regarding the main trigger of occurring anti-racism protests in different localities across the United States, and claims for a cumulative approach that is needed to determine why the tension is primarily there and to understand more accurately why the anti-racism protests tend to occur over space and time. For this reason, the current study argues to illuminate the causality between the frequency of protests at the state level and structural racism as an accumulative factor of institutionalized racial disparities.

THEORY

Structural racism is a multilateral concept. In my theory, structural racism is an autonomous grievance that accumulates a systemic set of wrongs being suffered by racial groups, particularly, by African Americans. It is reproduced through the invisible systemic policies and practices in the key structures of the state: criminal justice, education, wealth and housing. I claim that in order to understand the contention behind the racial disparities, it is not enough to examine racial hardships within one institutional structure. Racial deprivations happening within one institution reflect unequal consequences through other institutions as they are interlocking gears of one system. Institutional racism establishes uneven treatment for a given race of people, while "sanctioning inequality in status as well as in access to goods and services" (Jones, 1974). The stronger the level of this accumulative index of disparities within American territorial units, the higher level of grievance it reflects, and the more frequent anti-racism protests occur. Thus, I include the state racism index that measures structural racism and helps identify whether it determines the frequency of protests in American states or not.

DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

Institutional racism: being integrated into the structure of society, it is "unequal access to rights, privileges, benefits, resources, and the power mediated by societal structure and institutions and the destructive consequences of this unequal access" (Jones, 2000; Siegel 2020). In other words, those are "acts by the total white community against the black community" which are less overt, and less identifiable as regards "specific individuals

committing the acts"; but due to the operation of institutional racism in the established and respected forces of society, it receives less public conviction (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967).

Grievance: this concept is defined as a hardship that is being suffered within racial groups and has a form of a legitimate complaint based on racial oppression. I argue that black civilians experience the violation of their community conditions due to the constant practice of institutional racism. This fact motivates civilians to get involved in the political activity of their community within the state area they belong to. The argument is based on Kirk's "politics of prudence" (1993) where he claims that the sense of belonging as well as the value of community is essential because "the performance of duties in community teaches us prudence, and efficiency and charity" (Kirk, 1993). In other words, the order of good life is crucial within a community because "human nature is a constant, and moral truths are permanent" (Kirk, 1993). Therefore, when racial disparities happen against a particular community, it develops a collective sense of injustice (insurgent consciousness) that drives civilians to become protest or movement members where the racially-biased context stresses certain grievances around which protests or disorders are being organized (Meyer, 1998).

HYPOTHESIS

Based on the previously embedded concepts, I formulate the following hypothesis to test my theory:

H: *The anti-racism protests are more likely to occur in American states where the state racism index is higher.*

According to my hypothesis, the unit of my analysis is the American states where I test the relationship between the dependent variable - frequency of occurred protests - and the independent variable - structural racism, being gauged as a state racism index. Theoretically, African Americans experience systemic racial disparities that deprive their community conditions. Due to the systemic nature of disparities, the paper suggests accumulating the set of indicators that determine institutional racism and check whether it has a stronger effect on the frequency of occurring anti-racism protests rather than other existing grievances in different areas of society. If the state racism index shows its statistical significance in the analysis, then it means that, indeed, structural racism is an autonomous grievance that significantly affects the frequency of protest activity within American states.

VARIABLES AND OPERATIONALIZATION

Dependent variable: the frequency of all occurred anti-racism protests (the number of occurred protests), that provides a state-level perspective. However, due to the George Floyd killing (2020), in my statistical test, I will use this event of police violence as a turning point to divide my protest data in two time episodes: (a) before the killing of George Floyd and (b) after the George Floyd killing. Thus, for the later analysis, it is going to be operationalized as (a) the number of protests before the George Floyd killing; and (b) the number of protests after the George Floyd killing.

Independent variable: structural racism that is measured as a state racism index. The index consists of five domains: (1) residential segregation; (2) gaps in the incarceration rates; (3) gaps in economic indicators; (4) gaps in educational attainment; (5) gaps in employment status (Mesic, 2018).

(1) Residential segregation is measured through the index of dissimilarity - the percentage of African Americans that would need to move in order to attain an even distribution of blacks and whites across all the residential blocks within one state (Mesic, 2018); and the isolation index that gauges the extent of the spatial isolation of the Black residents from the White ones (Mesic, 2018).
(2) Incarceration gap is measured as the proportion of incarceration rate of African Americans to the incarceration rate among White people (Mesic, 2018).
(3) Economic indicator is used as the economic disparity index where the poverty level, median household income and rental housing over owning the house are taken into consideration, while it was calculated (Mesic, 2018).
(4) Educational attainment gap is used as a proportion of African Americans without a college degree to - White people without a college degree (Mesic, 2018).
(5) The Employment Disparity Index is applied by considering the gap between blacks and whites who do not participate in the labor force and the similar gap - but for those who are unemployed (Mesic, 2018).

Control variables: apart from controlling the Black population per state and the percent of college graduates per state for reducing distorting effects, I implement controls over those parameters that motivate populations to protest (this would help me identify whether the state racism index is statistically significant outside of regular grievances studied previously): (1)

poverty rate; (2) percent of state legislators who are black; (3) unemployment rate; (4) the number of people killed by police.

(1) Poverty rate is measured as the percent of adults from 18 to 64 years old with incomes below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold in 2017 per state; the aforementioned percent is calculated as the number of individuals aged from 18 to 64 years old who could be determined as a poverty holder divided by the total state population, times 100. I take the poverty rate for 2017 as a proxy variable and I assume that the poverty rate has not significantly changed from 2017 to 2020 (the timeline of my research). This is why the year of 2017 is presumably used as the best proxy for the sake of my analysis.

(2) Percent of state legislators who are black per state is also a proxy variable that shows data for the year of 2016.

(3) The unemployment rate is gauged as the prime-age unemployment to population ratio in 2017 per state, times 100 (a proxy variable);

(4) The number of people killed by police from 2013 to 2020 per state.

The percent of college graduates is calculated as the number of adults aged 25+ with a college degree (a Bachelor degree or higher) divided by the number of people who are 25 and older, times 100, in 2017, that is also applied as a proxy variable.

DATA COLLECTION

In this study, I perform a state-level analysis where I operate with American states. Thus, the number of my observations is 50 (N = 50). To examine anti-racism protests and the context of their frequency, I develop an updated dataset of protests against racial oppression, while merging it with demographic as well as political, social and economic data of structural racism.

Dependent Variable: The dataset of the Crowd Counting Consortium Data[10] captures 8 859 anti-racism protests, from January 21, 2017. The starting point is determined by the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States that followed a wave of massive civil rights protests against racial injustice and inequality. Due to my focus on racial identity deprivations, I amended my data by removing the protests that are not connected with racial injustice. For each anti-racism protest, there is a locality (state) and a captured number of protests happen in a state per year (given the time from 2017 to 2020). My updated dataset

[10] *See* Crowd Counting Consortium https://sites.google.com/view/crowdcountingconsortium/home

has the timeline from January 21, 2017 to December 31, 2020. This particular timeline is framed around the Donald Trump presidency being based on the narrative of white grievances, the core of which is victimization (Glasser, 2019). The following pattern serves as a linchpin for the current's paper theory and suggested variables because while proclaiming the narrative of white grievances for the internal U.S. policies, Donald Trump recreated segregationist policies that directly lead us to the origin of systemic racism (an independent variable); and advocated for military attacks or a "dominating the streets" approach against occurring anti-racism protests (a dependent variable) (Morris, 2020). By doing so, the former president attempted in limiting the political participation of civilians and in exacerbating structural disparities among minorities that directly corresponds with the current context of this research.

Independent variable: The data on the state racism index was obtained from the previous study conducted by Mesic (2018)[11] where the index was developed to measure structural racism at the state level. It contains the adaptation required for the validity of measures at the state level analysis.

Control variables: Black population and the number of people killed by police are retrieved from the Mapping Police Violence Database[12] which is an accurate database that captures fatal police shootings in each American state from 2013 until now. It sources from the data collection programs on the official use of police force in various American states (Virginia, California, Texas) while combining it with nationwide data on police killings from the Fatal Encounters database[13] which makes this dataset reliable for research analysis. The parameters on poverty, education attainment and unemployment are received from diversitydatakids database (data for a diverse and equitable future)[14] that is based on the US Census and the American Community Survey (a five-year estimate). The percent of state legislators who are black was taken from the dataset states[15] (political representation section of the dataset) that contains variables for each of the fifty states (Pollock, 2018).

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[11] *See* Mesic, A. (2018). The Relationship Between Structural Racism and Black-White Disparities in Fatal Police Shootings at the State Level. Journal of the National Medical Association, Volume 110, Issue 2, April 2018, Pages 106-116

[12] *See* https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/

[13] *See* FatalEncounters.org

[14] *See* https://www.diversitydatakids.org/

[15] *See* states dataset, Pollock P. (2018) A Stata Companion to Political Analysis. 4th ed. Washington: CQ Press, 2018

METHODOLOGY

This paper applies a quantitative method of research analysis where multiple linear regression analysis is being performed to investigate the causal relationship between the state racism index and the frequency of anti-racism protests at the state level. To proceed with the statistical analysis, STATA is being used. The multiple linear regression looks at the anti-racism protest activity from January 21, 2017 to December 31, 2020 in the 50 states across the USA. The multiple regression equation is as follows:

$$Yi = Const. + \beta 0\ (state\ racism\ index)i + all\ the\ implemented\ control\ variables$$

where,

Yi - a dependent variable; i = n observations, where my observations are American states; this variation is considered deliberately. The paper aims to make a localized snapshot, varying territorially (in states) but not in time due to the historical pattern of structural racism - a racial residential segregation.

State racism index i - an independent variable, which is defined and applied to this research paper relying on the previous scholar methodology (Mesic, 2018). The author measures the index within the dimension of housing, education, incarceration/criminal justice and socioeconomic status that matches the theoretical background of this study provided on structural racism.

To run the statistical analysis, I import the updated dataset of protests against racial disparities to STATA, where my variables receive the following labels (see Table 1 below):

1. NoP - the number of anti-racism protests;
2. NoPBF - the number of anti-racism protests before the George Floyd killing;
3. NoPAF - the number of anti-racism protests after the George Floyd killing;
4. StrRac - the state racism index;
5. PR - the poverty rate;
6. Unempl - the unemployment rate;
7. Edu - the percent of college graduates;
8. Blkleg - the percent of state legislators who are black;
9. NoPK - the number of people killed by police;
10. Bpop - the black population.

Table 1. List of Variables and Their Values

	State	NoP	NoPBF	NoPAF	StrRac	PR	Unempl	Edu	blkleg	NoPK	Bpop
1.	Alabama	120	11	109	41.2	9.4497685	28.034019	25.522789	25	158	1285737
2.	Alaska	39	4	35	40.8	6.3781963	26.642242	28.798843	2	49	22,817
3.	Arizona	78	7	71	34.8	8.3365375	24.573097	29.356522	1	392	286,614
4.	Arkansas	53	4	49	41.3	9.1325993	26.572647	23.407412	11	117	458,536
5.	California	1139	34	1105	56.8	7.6386711	23.274696	33.645023	5	1349	2164519
6.	Colorado	127	10	117	55.5	6.4424501	19.45269	41.20013	4	272	216,732
7.	Connecticut	222	12	210	63.9	5.5982626	20.037857	38.679371	7	41	351,817
8.	Delaware	14	2	12	38.5	7.9908794	24.292252	31.480986	5	22	204,665
9.	Florida	316	15	301	39.7	7.8929655	23.587234	29.656719	14	638	3167011
10.	Georgia	187	17	170	40.3	8.3494473	23.752029	30.908787	21	309	3195363
11.	Hawaii	17	0	17	28.5	5.2764043	23.89045	32.942318	1	40	24,472
12.	Idaho	37	1	36	36.1	7.5993788	23.17749	26.772911	0	57	10,739
13.	Illinois	318	8	310	67.8	7.1856898	20.708694	34.4296	16	195	1796057
14.	Indiana	163	11	152	46.4	7.7297284	21.422852	26.817879	7	152	610,343
15.	Iowa	109	10	99	59.1	6.5622687	15.473633	28.932487	2	51	107,471
16.	Kansas	67	5	62	51.2	6.9236339	18.767128	33.7481	4	81	163,713
17.	Kentucky	151	9	142	34.1	10.145367	26.493477	23.966984	4	140	349,407
18.	Louisiana	82	3	79	48	10.972323	27.798477	23.796766	22	172	1492230
19.	Maine	97	6	91	50.1	6.7871487	19.490395	32.06691	0	35	16,990
20.	Maryland	147	10	137	49.7	5.3215701	18.585297	39.653	22	144	1759438
21.	Massachusetts	280	12	268	54.6	6.054558	18.364922	43.408985	3	61	463,796
22.	Michigan	311	15	296	55.6	8.2381319	22.739098	29.116789	14	139	1360345
23.	Minnesota	127	8	119	70	5.6053181	14.758667	36.050186	1	94	336,505
24.	Mississippi	42	2	40	42.3	10.699012	29.154106	21.869446	26	120	1121752
25.	Missouri	159	4	155	44.6	7.5428296	20.875641	29.054436	9	230	699,730
26.	Montana	37	2	35	25.9	7.8368525	19.273666	32.31007	0	51	4,348
27.	Nebraska	48	3	45	53.4	6.0441735	15.811775	31.667957	2	40	88,442
28.	Nevada	36	3	33	34.7	7.5616975	22.529709	24.878101	11	147	249,967
29.	New Hampshire	49	3	46	34.4	4.534832	16.67057	36.940517	1	21	17,622
30.	New Jersey	158	10	148	68.5	5.5724458	19.743088	39.72559	13	113	1129257
31.	New Mexico	65	6	59	36	10.952795	30.184387	27.057617	2	164	38,016
32.	New York	791	23	768	60.3	7.9987347	21.58065	36.032955	14	180	2808679
33.	North Carolina	241	18	223	43.3	8.3223837	22.776962	31.334873	14	239	2146254
34.	North Dakota	20	0	20	41.9	6.1479578	14.99855	30.73962	0	14	20,113
35.	Ohio	466	12	454	50.4	7.9511993	21.297203	27.955177	14	237	1418048
36.	Oklahoma	63	3	60	39.2	8.8849624	25.558563	25.538679	3	243	282,622
37.	Oregon	319	13	306	36.5	8.2293163	21.403244	33.724621	3	128	74,356
38.	Pennsylvania	543	15	528	59.1	7.1797827	21.345802	31.439411	7	192	1360576
39.	Rhode Island	40	3	37	52	6.5518909	20.238342	33.451069	4	6	59,001
40.	South Carolina	85	7	78	46.7	8.6570519	24.069908	28.001791	19	134	1328352
41.	South Dakota	21	1	20	43.3	7.3821372	17.003479	28.149939	0	27	15,840
42.	Tennessee	191	11	180	38	8.572972	23.605118	27.333004	14	207	1107218
43.	Texas	365	28	337	43.9	7.8476338	23.407761	29.596048	8	805	3269253
44.	Utah	66	3	63	45.1	5.8264239	20.789734	34.615757	2	98	33,713
45.	Vermont	61	5	56	41.6	7.0040978	16.802582	38.283321	1	13	7,602
46.	Virginia	238	17	221	49.2	6.276886	21.555031	38.711376	11	140	1582421
47.	Washington	337	15	322	38.6	6.6005734	21.773315	35.49844	2	253	259,482
48.	West Virginia	40	5	35	36.2	11.358385	31.487671	20.202135	0	80	65,597
49.	Wisconsin	183	5	178	74.9	6.6673024	16.330627	30.380491	6	130	361,909
50.	Wyoming	21	2	19	35.6	6.6358905	20.13324	27.623676	0	23	5,149

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. The Means and Variances of Each Variable

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
NoP	50	177.72	206.9781	14	1139
NoPBF	50	8.66	7.133165	0	34
NoPAF	50	169.06	200.9015	12	1105
StrRac	50	46.392	11.0453	25.9	74.9
PR	50	7.52903	1.556539	4.534832	11.35839
Unempl	50	21.8458	3.935808	14.75867	31.48767
Edu	50	31.12951	5.206448	20.20213	43.40899
blkleg	50	7.54	7.409894	0	26
NoPK	50	174.86	224.0973	6	1349
Bpop	50	788012.7	939226.9	4348	3269253

Regression Results

This statistical test runs 3 regression models because in the protest data, there are 433 anti-racism protests that occurred between January 21, 2017 and May 25, 2020 (the George Floyd killing) and 8 426 protests - from May 25, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This provides motivation to divide the data in two time episodes where the George Floyd killing is a determining factor in the outcome variable. This is done to check whether the relationship between the state racism index and the protest frequency is statistically significant before this event and whether it is going to be statistically significant after it, so this step can presumably strengthen the validity of the upcoming results or bring more light to this research.

A. Regression Model for all the occurred anti-racism protests

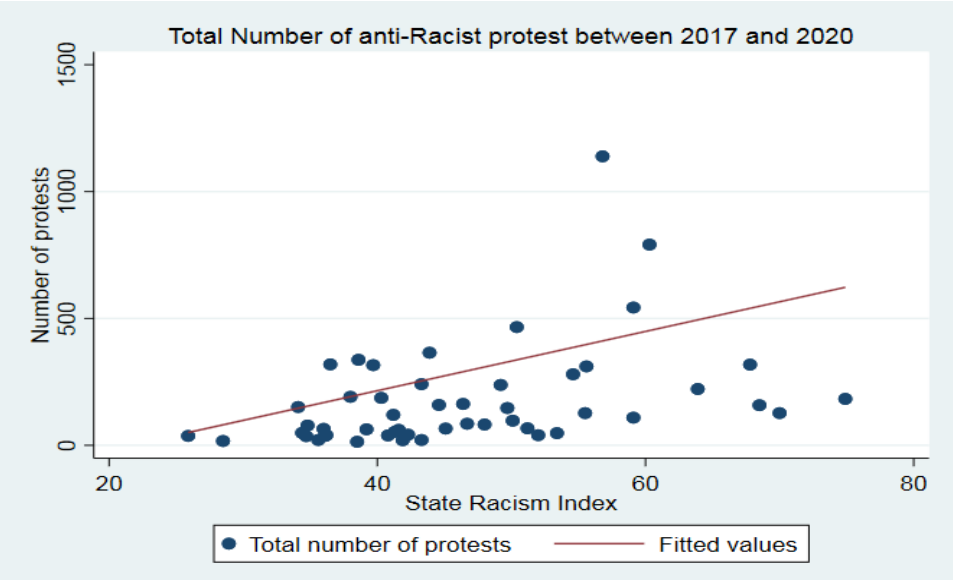
Figure 1. Regression Results for All Anti-Racism Protests

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	50
				F(7, 42)	=	12.81
Model	1429410.75	7	204201.535	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	669745.334	42	15946.3175	R-squared	=	0.6809
				Adj R-squared	=	0.6278
Total	2099156.08	49	42839.92	Root MSE	=	126.28

NoP	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
StrRac	5.389513	2.052837	2.63	0.012	1.24672	9.532306
Unempl	1.167156	8.492236	0.14	0.891	-15.97087	18.30518
PR	25.46373	23.62729	1.08	0.287	-22.21808	73.14554
Edu	9.575472	5.633039	1.70	0.097	-1.79246	20.9434
NoPK	.465443	.1200132	3.88	0.000	.2232467	.7076394
blkleg	-5.572434	4.276654	-1.30	0.200	-14.20307	3.058204
Bpop	.0000697	.0000389	1.79	0.080	-8.80e-06	.0001482
_cons	-681.9099	316.0182	-2.16	0.037	-1319.66	-44.15937

According to this model, the effect of the state racism index is statistically significant (t = 2.63, p-value of 0.012 < .05). In this multiple regression, adjusted R-squared communicates how well structural racism and included control variables explain the occurring protests. In this case, structural racism and control variables account for 62.7 % of the variation in occurring anti-racism protests. Graph 1 displays the positive relationship between the state racism index and the frequency of protests.

Graph 1. Relationship Between Structural Racism and Anti-Racism Protests



B. Regression Model for the Anti-Racism Protests happened before the George Floyd killing

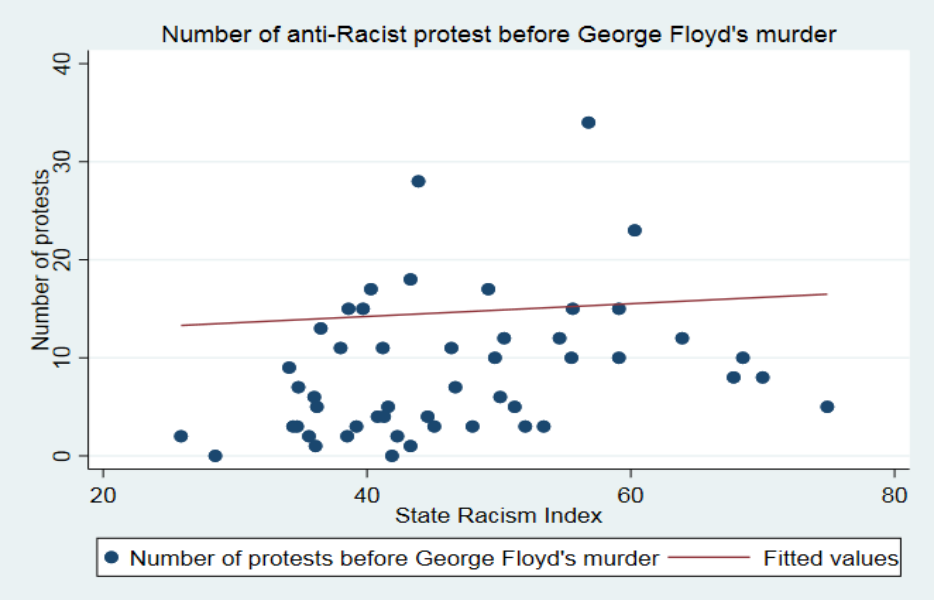
Figure 2. Regression Results for Anti-Racism Protests Before the George Floyd Killing

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	50
				F(7, 42)	=	22.82
Model	1974.1472	7	282.021029	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	519.072797	42	12.3588761	R-squared	=	0.7918
				Adj R-squared	=	0.7571
Total	2493.22	49	50.8820408	Root MSE	=	3.5155

NoPBF	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
StrRac	.0997582	.0571497	1.75	0.088	-.0155745	.2150909
Unempl	.1358508	.2364184	0.57	0.569	-.3412609	.6129625
PR	.8812186	.6577688	1.34	0.188	-.4462125	2.20865
Edu	.4550616	.1568202	2.90	0.006	.1385856	.7715375
NoPK	.0120252	.0033411	3.60	0.001	.0052826	.0187678
blkleg	-.2474423	.1190593	-2.08	0.044	-.4877137	-.0071708
Bpop	4.47e-06	1.08e-06	4.13	0.000	2.29e-06	6.66e-06
_cons	-23.49926	8.797744	-2.67	0.011	-41.25382	-5.74469

According to this statistical test, the effect of the state racism index is again statistically significant (t=1.75, p-value of 0.088 < .1). The adjusted R-squared also communicates how well structural racism with incorporated control variables explain the occurring protests but now before the George's Floyd murder. Now, structural racism and control variables account for 75.7 % of the variation in occurring anti-racism protests. Graph 2 also displays the positive relationship between state racism index and the frequency of protests. However, the slope coefficient is smaller than in the first regression (A) and the third regression (C).

Graph 2. Relationship Between Structural Racism and Anti-Racism Protests before Floyd's murder



C. Regression Model for the anti-racism protests happened after the George Floyd killing

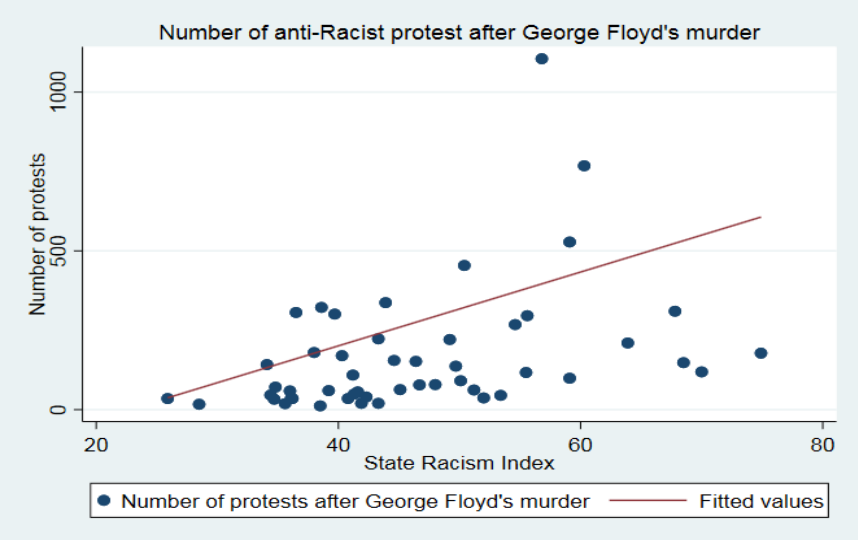
Figure 3. Regression Results for Anti-Racism Protests After the George Floyd Killing

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	50
				F(7, 42)	=	12.27
Model	1328104.61	7	189729.23	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	649604.211	42	15466.7669	R-squared	=	0.6715
				Adj R-squared	=	0.6168
Total	1977708.82	49	40361.4045	Root MSE	=	124.37

NoPAF	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
StrRac	5.289754	2.021734	2.62	0.012	1.20973	9.369779
Unempl	1.031305	8.363568	0.12	0.902	-15.84706	17.90967
PR	24.58251	23.26931	1.06	0.297	-22.37686	71.54188
Edu	9.120411	5.547692	1.64	0.108	-2.075284	20.31611
NoPK	.4534179	.1181948	3.84	0.000	.2148911	.6919446
blkleg	-5.324992	4.211858	-1.26	0.213	-13.82486	3.174882
Bpop	.0000652	.0000383	1.70	0.096	-.0000121	.0001426
_cons	-658.4106	311.2301	-2.12	0.040	-1286.498	-30.32278

According to this model, the effect of the state racism index is again statistically significant (t=2.62, p-value of 0.012 < .05). The adjusted R-squared again communicates how well structural racism and control variables explain the occurring protests but now after the George's Floyd killing. Now, structural racism and control variables account for 61.6 % of the variation in occurring anti-racism protests. Again, Graph 3 displays the positive relationship between independent and dependent variables. However, the slope coefficient is greater than in the second regression (B) - before the George Floyd murder.

Graph 3. Relationship Between Structural Racism and Anti-Racism Protests after Floyd's killing



Looking at these results, we can say that in the first model for all considered protests (A) the increase of each unit of structural racism increases the number of anti-racism protests by 5.4 (a statistically significant positive relationship, p-value < .05). In other words, if structural racism grows, then the number of protests will increase by 5.4. In the second model (B), the increase of each unit of structural racism increases the number of anti-racism protests by 0.1 (a statistically significant positive relationship, p-value < .1) before the George Floyd case. In the third model (C), the increase of each unit of structural racism increases the number of anti-racism protests by 5.3 (a statistically significant positive relationship, p-value < .05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Anti-racism protests occurring in U.S. society are a considerable example of contentious politics that can be explained through a prism of grievances, deprivations and political aspects of particular presidential administrations due to the color diversity of the American population. The findings show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between structural racism and the frequency of anti-racism protests. Moreover, the received results are robust to the occurred George Floyd's murder by the security forces. The relationship between structural racism and the protest frequency is 50 times greater after the George Floyd killing than before.

The research findings derived from the regression analysis have confirmed that my proposition about structural racism as an accumulative factor of systemic hardships exists, and it autonomously causes the frequency of anti-racism protests. The George Floyd killing highlights that if the racially-biased event related to governmental institutions violates the community conditions, then the collective sense of injustice grows and motivates civilians to politically participate in a more frequent manner.

While evaluating the previous scholar's works and yet again focusing on conducting the regression analysis for this research, I found that my findings confirm the suggested theory as well as the implemented hypothesis. Structural racism exists in today's reality of the U.S. society, and it is closely tied with the frequency of occurring protests across the country at the state level. Even more importantly, it was demonstrated that there is a strong positive relationship between the state racism index and the number of anti-racism protests so that it is possible to conclude that structural racism autonomously as a grievance-based approach exists in the American states. The more racial groups, particularly, African Americans are exposed to systemic racial disparities, the more powerful structural racism as a grievance motivates

civilians to protect their communities and politically participate in protests for expressing their legitimate complaints. The received findings correspond with the previous research regarding institutionalized racial disparities (Mesic 2018; Siegel 2020; Wong 2020; Richardson 2015), however, they also expand the literature while discussing structural racism as a catalyst within the political participation in the form of protests.

The limitations for this study might be the colorblind ideology (Rose, 2015) that denies the theory of structural racism. Considering the fact that in the results before the George Floyd murder, the structural racism was statistically significant but not extremely, skeptics might deny the paper's theory while arguing that "one bad apple" is in place, and if striking events such as racially-biased killings by police occur, it would definitely cause public reaction but it does not mean that systemic disparities stand behind it. Also, one might consider other external factors that can affect the protest frequency. Namely, the COVID-2019 pandemic with the further strict country lockdown could provoke civilians to protest more frequently, meaning that it is not directly connected to structural disparities. Further research is needed to eliminate existing limitations for the presented theory in this paper. In addition, the research outcome gives a perspective to go beyond specific presidential offices as it was initially suggested before with the Trump administration. It was found out in this paper that structural racism is indeed an autonomous grievance contributing to the protest activity, however, the conducted regression analysis is not sufficient to make a conclusion whether the number of protests changes depending on various time periods with a corresponding presidential administration. Thus, the findings encourage another separate investigation for this purpose.

The main novelty of this study is discovering the relationship between systemic racism and protests, while proposing to examine institutionalized racism as an autonomous phenomenon affecting the political participation of civilians. It expands the current literature and goes beyond the violence component of police brutality being often suggested by scholars. What's more, the received results demonstrate that structural racism goes beyond the Trump Presidency indicating that it has always been existing as a factor influencing contentious acts within American society. In other words, findings might be used as a potential predictor of social conflicts in the United States and potentially can be tested in various presidential administrations, including the Trump office in the further research.

Empirically, this paper contributes to creating an updated dataset on anti-racism protests by merging it with data from demographic background as well as social, political and economic. For further research, it would be valuable to study deeper the structural racism as a grievance by implementing a city-level analysis instead and expanding the index of state racism further. This potentially might bring interesting results for further discussions in the framework of systemic disparities.

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