
National Convention Protest Survey Report: Participants at Public Events Outside the 2016 RNC and DNC

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NATIONAL CONVENTION PROTEST SURVEY REPORT: PARTICIPANTS AT PUBLIC EVENTS OUTSIDE THE 2016 RNC AND DNC

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- We explain the methodology used to select participants and administer the survey as well as the process of survey weighting.
- Who were the participants?
 - Participants attended events outside the conventions an average of 2.5 days
 - The average participant age was 43 outside the DNC and 48.5 outside the RNC
 - Most participants at both conventions were college educated but not employed full-time
- What connection did the participants have to the election?
 - Almost all participants outside the DNC and RNC were registered voters
 - A higher percentage of participants outside the RNC identified as democrats than did those outside the DNC
 - Supporters of Bernie Sanders dominated participation at the RNC and DNC
 - The majority of participants outside the RNC intended to support Hillary Clinton in the general election, while the majority of participants outside the DNC intended to support Jill Stein
- Participants at both conventions were more politically involved than the general public
- What positions did participants have on key social, political, and economic issues?
 - Participants outside the DNC see no real choice in the presidential election
 - Participants outside DNC feel that elites control the Democratic party
 - Strong support for unions was found among participants at both conventions
 - Serious differences exist on climate change between those who will vote Republican and those who will vote Democrat or for a Third party candidate
 - A significant minority at both conventions believe in some limits on abortion
 - A majority of participants at both conventions support gun control
- We provide a list of current articles written or in progress using these data

1 SURVEY OVERVIEW

SURVEY LOCATION AND TIME FRAME This survey was fielded during the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland from July 18th to 21st, 2016 and the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, which took place from July 25th through July 28th, 2016. Participants in the survey were selected from public events outside of the convention that were performed or advertised as related to the convention. Examples of such events include events that were a response to the convention as well as events that were a complement to the convention. These events occurred in public venues, mostly on the streets, parks, or public squares of the host cities. While it may be possible that there were some individuals who participated only in events before or after the conventions, the survey was fielded only during the official convention.

SURVEY PURPOSE The purpose of the survey was to achieve a random sample of these event participants at both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions that would represent the overall participant population as closely as possible. This was done to gather information on the attitudes, motivations, and demographic information of individuals who chose to participate in the rallies, demonstrations, or protests. This information was gathered with the intent of future use in political science research.

SURVEY TEAM The survey was made possible through support from The Pennsylvania State University and the University of Pennsylvania. The survey team consisted of primary investigators Lee Ann Banaszak, Daniel Gillion, and John McCarthy from The Pennsylvania State University and the University of Pennsylvania. Kevin Reuning, Patricia Posey, and Shan-Jan Sarah Liu served as additional team leaders. Eleven undergraduate students from The Pennsylvania State University and eight undergraduate students from the University of Pennsylvania served as the main surveyors.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION To gather a sample population that would most closely approximate the overall population, the researchers used sampling process protocols that were outlined and tested as a part of the European Protest Survey¹. Participants present at the events were sampled using a division and counting process. The event sites were divided into sections and then a single research team worked through each section, interviewing

¹See Klandermans, B, J Van Stekelenburg, D Van Troost, A Van Leeuwen, S Walgrave, J Verhulst, J Van Laer and R Wouters. 2011. "Manual for data collection on protest demonstrations." *Caught in the act of protest: Contextualizing contestation (CCC-project), Version 3.*

every nth person.² Using a set counting pattern, team leaders selected the individuals to be approached. Marching events followed a similar system of participant selection, though it was modified to account for the moving group. By using a systematic approach and being careful to interview only those individuals chosen by the formula, the project aimed to obtain a representative set of responses.

2 SURVEY DETAILS

SURVEY PARTICIPATION This survey was administered in several phases. The first phase occurred on-site at the protest location. The survey team, after randomly selecting a protest participant to approach asked the individual if they were willing to speak to the surveyor. If the individual agreed, the surveyor asked if the individual was over 18 years of age and then administered a short or long form on-site survey. Once the on-site survey was administered, the surveyor asked the individual to complete a much longer survey later. Table 2.1 provides the participation rates in the on-site survey.

Table 2.1: On-site Participation Rates by Participants

	Approached	Agreed	Percent
DNC	660	522	79%
RNC	491	294	60%
Both	1151	816	71%

There were three ways the post-event survey could be completed: by returning a paper booklet given to the individual on-site, by completing a digital copy of the survey emailed to the participant (if they provided an email), or by navigating to the on-line version of the survey using a URL found on a card that the surveyor handed to participants. In total, about 20% of individuals who agreed to speak with the surveyors took the longer, post-event survey. This represents 14% of individuals approached by surveyors at the RNC and 23% of individuals approached by surveyors at the DNC (see table 2.2).

SURVEY WEIGHTING Weighting the survey is a process where actual survey responses are given more or less weight statistically based on the likelihood of being among the people who completed the survey. In our case, the weighting is used to estimate the broader population

²The number used in place of n was determined by the team leader based off the size of the event.

Table 2.2: Forms of Post-Event Participation and Overall Participation Rates

	Total	Booklet	Email	Card	Percent
DNC	154	7	140	7	23%
RNC	69	5	61	3	14%
Both	223	12	201	10	19%

who participated in the events outside the convention. Unless otherwise indicated below, we have weighted the survey responses to account for those individuals who may have had multiple opportunities to be asked (because, for example, they participated in multiple events) and to account for people who were more likely to participate if approached.

3 DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS OUTSIDE THE CONVENTIONS

Over the course of the DNC and the RNC, survey team leaders identified 69 distinct events that they attended. 36 of these occurred at the DNC. 33 events were observed at the RNC. Survey team leaders assessed approximate sizes for each demonstration they observed. Demonstration sizes across the two conventions ranged from 25 event attendees to 1300. The average event size across both the DNC and RNC was 372.4 attendees. Events at the DNC ranged from 50 to 1300 attendees with an average size of 475.4 attendees. Events at the RNC ranged from 25 to 750 attendees with an average size of 260.2 attendees.

We categorized events as stationary protests or rallies, unofficial marches, or permitted marches. Of the 69 events identified by the survey team leaders, 49 or 71% were categorized as stationary events. 19 or 27.5% of the events were permitted marches. Only 1 or 1.5% of the observed events were unofficial marches. This distribution was similar for demonstrations at both the RNC and DNC.

4 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION DAYS Participation in the demonstrations at the DNC and RNC for at least part of the day differed slightly between the two conventions. On average, participants attended events outside the conventions for 2.5 out of the 4 days. Using weighting, it was found that participants at the RNC participated in slightly fewer events on average, though the average was still around 2.5.

The percentage of participants who participated in demonstrations during the DNC decreased over the course of the four days. After Tuesday, a lower percentage of participants participated in the demonstrations, with only 39.7% of DNC demonstrators participating in at least part of the day on Thursday. This pattern was not found in participants at the RNC. The percentage of demonstrators participating for part of the day increased steadily from 51.7% on Monday to 62.5% on Thursday.

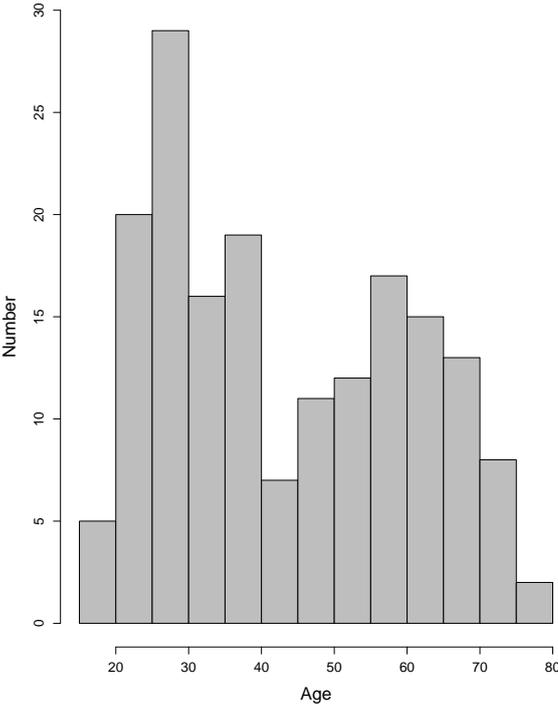


Figure 4.1: Age of Participants Surveyed

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS Participants in the 2016 Democratic and Republican national conventions were evenly split along male/female gender lines. There were slightly more protesters who were identified as female at the DNC and slightly more protesters who were identified as male at the RNC.

The ages of participants in the final survey were fairly well dispersed for both the DNC and RNC participants. Ages ranged from 18 to 80 with a median age of 40 for the full survey population. Survey participants from the DNC ranged from 19 to 74 with a median age of 37. Survey participants from the RNC ranged from 18 to 80 with a median age of 49. Figure 4.1 shows the age range of participants in the final survey.

Using weighting, the average age of participants in events at the Democratic national convention was 43. The average age at the Republican national convention was higher at 48.5. The overall weighted average age of participants at either the DNC or RNC was 45.

Survey participants were asked which race or races they identified with and could choose as many categories as they felt accurately described their identity. Nine of the 170 individuals who responded to the question on race selected more than one race. Using the survey responses regarding race, weighting was used to approximate the percentage of protesters at each convention who might identify with each race. These results are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Protest Participant Race

	DNC	RNC	Both
White	71.9%	75.4%	73.1%
Black	11.1%	5.3%	9.2%
Hispanic	10.3%	10.5%	10.4%
Asian	4.4%	0.8%	3.2%
Native American	4.5%	1.1%	3.3%
Pacific Islander	2.4%	0%	1.5%
Other	2.7%	9.8%	5.2%

PARTICIPANTS LARGELY COLLEGE EDUCATED Overall, most participants in demonstrations at the RNC and DNC had some level of college education, as is shown in table 4.2. Education levels of participants were similar between DNC and RNC participants. Education categories were high school, some college, two year college degree, four year college degree, professional degree, masters degree, and doctoral degree.

Table 4.2: Participant Education

	H.S.	Some College	College Degree	Advanced Degree
DNC	5.4%	16.0%	46.9%	31.7%
RNC	6.6%	13.1%	42.5%	37.7%
Both	5.8%	15.0%	45.4%	33.8%

Only 5.4% of participants at the DNC and 6.6% of participants at the RNC had only a high school level of education. The largest education category for participants at the DNC

was four year, bachelors degrees with 36.8%. At the RNC, the largest category was masters degrees at 28.9%.

MOST PARTICIPANTS LACKED FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT The majority of participants in demonstrations at the RNC and DNC were employed either part-time or full-time. Full details can be found in table 4.3. 49.1% of participants at the DNC and 42.3% of participants at the RNC were employed full time at the time of the demonstration. The most significant difference in employment between participants at the RNC and DNC were the percentage of retired participants. 29.5% of participants at the RNC were retired, as compared to 11.8% of DNC demonstrators. Employment categories were full time employment, part time employment, unemployed, temporarily laid off, retired, homemaker, and disabled.

Table 4.3: Participant Employment

	FT	PT	Student	Unemployed or Laid off	Retired, Home or Disabled
DNC	49.1%	17.9%	6.5%	10.4%	16.1%
RNC	42.3%	9.7%	9.1%	4.4%	34.5%
Both	46.7%	15.0%	7.4%	8.3%	22.6%

MOST PARTICIPANTS NOT RELIGIOUS 43.3% of DNC participants and 35.1% of RNC participants recorded 'none' for their identified religion. 28.2% of protesters at the RNC fell into the Catholic, Protestant, or other Christian religious categories. 22.5% of DNC protesters fell into one of those three categories.

Table 4.4: Religion of Participants

	Catholic	Other Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Other	None
DNC	9.2%	13.6%	2.0%	0%	31.2%	44.0%
RNC	12.6%	26.7%	7.4%	3.2%	14.2%	35.8%
Both	10.4%	18.3%	3.9%	1.1%	25.1%	41.1%

RNC DREW MORE FROM STATE THAN DNC The home locations of the participants at the DNC and RNC demonstrations differed. Only 16% of DNC demonstrators were residents of

Pennsylvania, the state where the convention occurred. The remainder came from outside of Pennsylvania. 50.5% of participants at the RNC demonstrations came from Ohio, the state in which the convention was held.

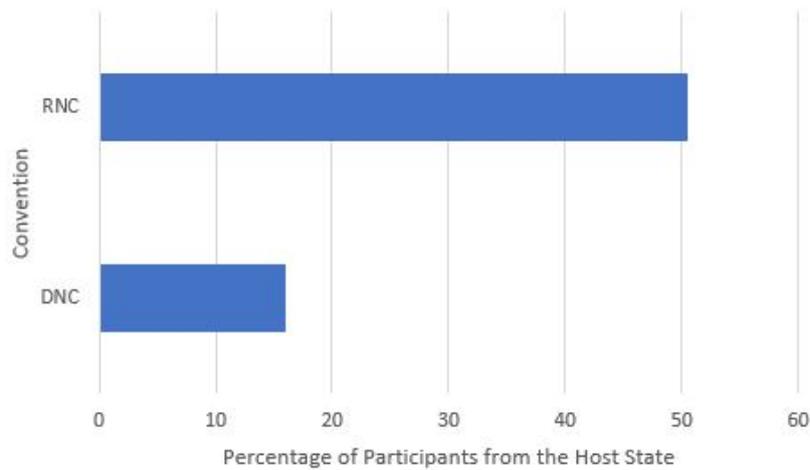


Figure 4.2: Percent of Participants from the Host State

5 PARTICIPANT POLITICAL PREFERENCES

Survey participants were also asked questions regarding their voter registration status, connections to political parties, vote in the 2016 presidential primary elections, and their voting intentions for the general election. These responses were weighted to approximate the broader protest population.

VOTER REGISTRATION The overwhelming majority of participants in demonstrations at both the DNC and RNC were registered to vote. Around 98% of demonstrators at the DNC and 95% of demonstrators at the RNC were registered at the time of the conventions. This is much higher than the national average, as we would expect from engaged citizens.

IDENTIFICATION WITH A POLITICAL PARTY Overall, there were few protesters at either the RNC or DNC who identified as Republicans. Only 12.54% of participants at the RNC were Republican while none of those who responded at the DNC were. 50% of protesters at the RNC and 32% of protesters at the DNC were Democrats. 23% of protesters at the RNC and 44.5% of protesters at the DNC were independents. A significant minority (23% at the DNC and 12% at the RNC) supported one of the third parties.

Table 5.1: Participant Political Party Identification

	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Third Party
DNC	32%	44.5%	0%	23%
RNC	51%	24%	13%	12%
Both	39%	37%	4.5%	19%

SANDERS SUPPORTERS DOMINATED PARTICIPATION We asked participants to tell us who they voted for in the primary election. Participants at the DNC overwhelmingly voted for Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary. Sanders also had the highest primary vote share among protesters at the RNC. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton received a higher percentage of primary votes among protesters at the RNC than at the DNC. Donald Trump and Ted Cruz both received low primary vote totals among protest participants at both conventions, though Donald Trump did receive 12% among protesters at the RNC.

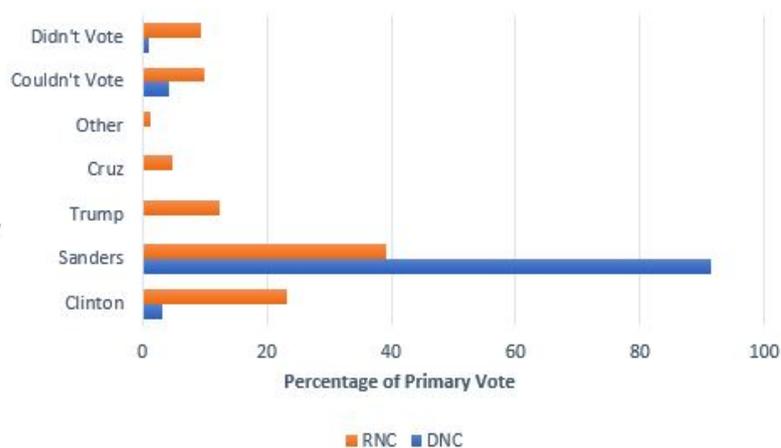


Figure 5.1: Primary Vote by Convention

CLINTON AND STEIN SUPPORTERS A MAJORITY Survey participants were also asked which candidate they were intending to vote for in the November 2016 general election. Using that information, approximations of the intended vote of the broader participant population were generated, as illustrated in figure 5.2. Jill Stein garnered the largest percentage of intended vote among DNC participants at the time of the convention, while Hillary Clinton had the largest percentage of intended vote among participants at the RNC. This suggests very different people participated outside of the Republican and Democratic conventions.

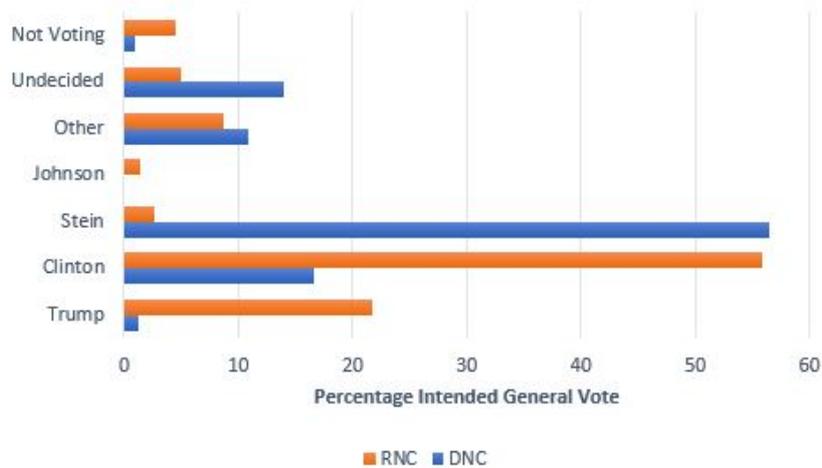


Figure 5.2: Intended Vote in the General Election by Convention

The preference for third party candidates among DNC protest participants was also indicated in the responses received to a survey question which asked if American democracy would be stronger if third parties played a greater role in the system. Respondents were asked to express how greatly they agreed or disagreed with that statement by placing themselves on a 1 through 5 scale with 1 representing strong agreement and 5 representing strong disagreement. After applying the weighting procedure, the average score for DNC protest participants was 1.17, representing very strong approval for third parties. Approval among RNC participants was also high with an average score of 1.96.

6 POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP The majority of participants in both the RNC and DNC were active with political organizations, though more DNC participants were active with organizations than RNC participants. About 75% of DNC participants and 58.5% of RNC participants were active with organizations. Both percentages far exceed the organizational involvement of the general population.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION Survey participants were asked a series of questions regarding their involvement with national, state, and local political parties. Respondents were asked whether they had donated to, volunteered for, or attended an event in support of a national or state/local candidate in the past four years.

Participation in all three categories was higher among DNC participants as compared to RNC participants. Political participation in state and local campaigns followed similar patterns. The weighted percentages of DNC and RNC attendees who participated in a national or state/local candidate can be found in figures 6.1 and 6.2.

Using the survey results, an index measure of overall level of political participation was created with values ranging from 0 through 6. Participants received 1 point for each participation category (donating to, volunteering for, or attending an event in support of a national or state/local candidate).

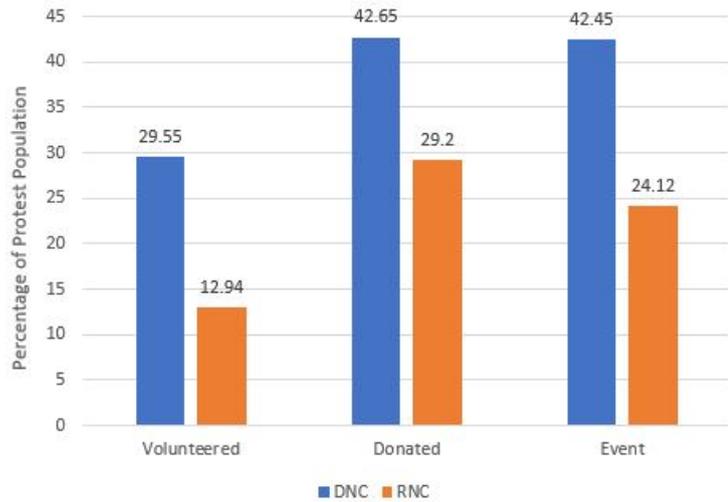


Figure 6.1: Participation in National Campaigns

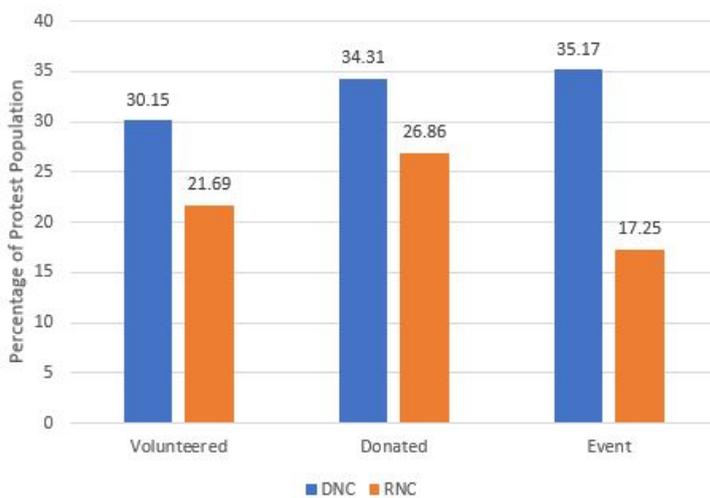


Figure 6.2: Participation in State/Local Campaigns

Weighting this measure of overall political participation, attendees at the DNC had an average score of 2.14 while participants at the RNC had an average score of 1.32. This indicates that, on average, participants at the DNC reported engaging in roughly one more type of campaign activity than participants at the RNC.

Despite this, the average index scores for both conventions were generally low, indicating that few individuals participated in more than 2-3 ways.

7 PARTICIPANT POSITIONS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

As part of the longer survey, participants were asked a number of issue-specific questions to assess their position on important social, economic, and political issues. We have selected some of these questions and report the results here. Most questions involved the participant how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a statement that was provided.

PARTICIPANTS AT THE DNC SEE NO REAL CHOICE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION Survey participants rated their agreement with the statement “the 2016 presidential election offers voters a real choice” on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. Using survey weighting, it was found that participants in events at the DNC had an average response of 4.20 while RNC participants had an average score of 3.22. Both these results indicate general disagreement with the statement, though the average response from RNC participants was very close to a neutral value of 3. The average score of 4.20 among event participants at the DNC indicates that most strongly disagreed with the idea that the 2016 presidential election offered a real choice to voters.

DIFFERENCES AMONG POLITICAL PARTIES We asked survey participants to rate their agreement with the statement “the Democratic and Republican parties differ significantly from each other” on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. Those participating outside the DNC had an average response of 3.4 while participants outside the RNC had an average score of 2.0. This suggests participants outside the RNC generally agreed that the two parties differ while participants outside the DNC were more neutral or leaned slightly towards disagreeing.

PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE THE RNC FEEL THEY HAVE LESS SAY IN GOVERNMENT THAN THOSE OUTSIDE THE DNC Survey participants rated their agreement with the statement “people like me don’t have any say about what the government does” on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. Participants in events outside the DNC had an average response of 3.8 while participants outside the RNC had an average score of 2.8. This indicates that participants outside the RNC felt like they had less of a say in what the government does than did participants outside the DNC.

PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE DNC SEE ELITES CONTROLLING PARTY We asked respondents outside the DNC to indicate their agreement with the statement “elite members of the Democratic party control what is going on within the party”. Similarly, we asked participants

outside the RNC to indicate their agreement with the statement “elite members of the Republican party control what is going on within the party”. In both cases they were provided a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. The average response for participants outside of the DNC was 1.3 while the average for participants outside the RNC was 2.6, suggesting that those outside of the DNC saw more elite control of the party than those outside of the RNC. Both scores reflect the sense that on average participants in the demonstrations, rallies, and marches outside of both conventions agreed that party elites control the inner workings of the party that was holding the conventions.

SUPPORT FOR UNIONS STRONG OUTSIDE BOTH CONVENTIONS Survey participants were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests” on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating strong disagreement. Participants in the rallies, demonstrations, and rallies outside the DNC had an average response of 1.4 while participants outside the RNC had an average score of 2.0. These scores indicate that participants outside both conventions were generally supportive of unions. This trend remained when comparing protesters who identified as Democrats to protesters who identified as Republicans.

SERIOUS IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN VIEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE Survey participants were asked “from what you’ve read and heard, is there evidence that the average temperature on earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades or not?” and given the following possible responses:

- Yes, mostly because of human activity such as burning fossil fuels
- Yes, mostly because of natural patterns in the earth’s environment
- No, the earth is not getting any warmer
- Don’t know

The weighted results found that the majority of participants believed that global warming is occurring and that it is primarily caused by human activity. Approximately 97% of participants outside the DNC and 76% of participants outside the RNC believed that climate change caused by humans occurred. However, as figure 7.1 shows, there were significant differences based on party with a majority of those identifying with the Republican party not believing in climate change or believing climate change is not caused by humans.

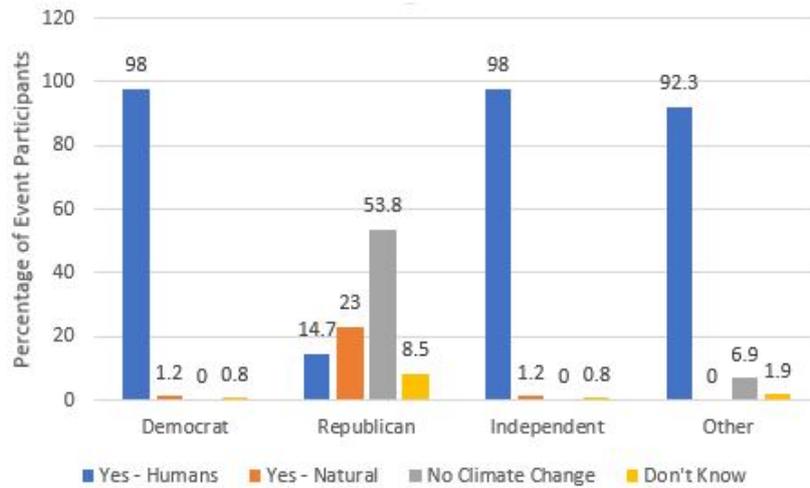


Figure 7.1: Participant Opinions on Global Warming by Party

SIGNIFICANT MINORITY BELIEVE IN SOME LIMITATIONS ON ABORTION ACCESS Survey respondents were asked “do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal under some circumstances, or illegal under all circumstances?”. The majority of participants at both conventions thought that abortion should be legal under either some or all circumstances, although a sizable minority at both conventions advocated for limiting abortion in some circumstances. Participants outside the RNC were more likely to place restrictions on under what circumstances abortion would be considered acceptable.

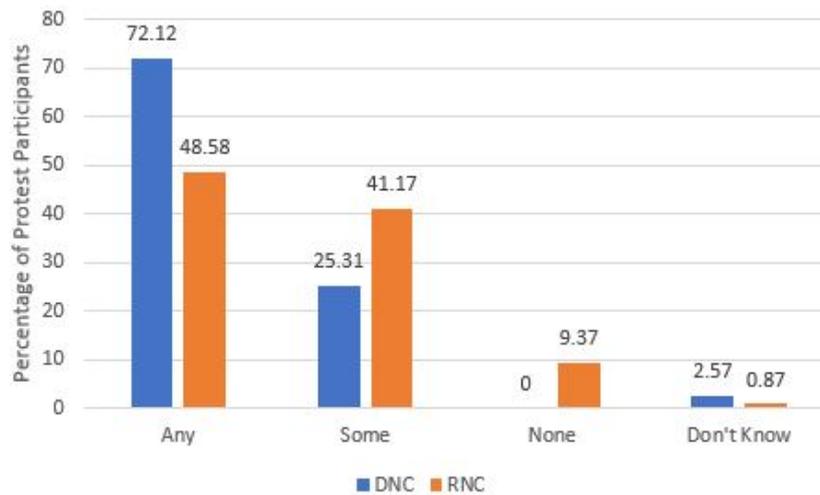


Figure 7.2: Participant Positions on Abortion

MAJORITY OUTSIDE BOTH CONVENTIONS SUPPORT GUN CONTROL Survey respondents were asked “do you think the federal government should make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now, make it easier for people to buy a gun, or keep these rules about the same as they are now?”. The positions of the general participant population outside each convention were approximated (using weights). These results are found in figure 7.3. The majority of participants outside both conventions thought that it should be more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now. Participants outside the RNC were more likely to be in favor of easier gun access or unchanged gun access policy.

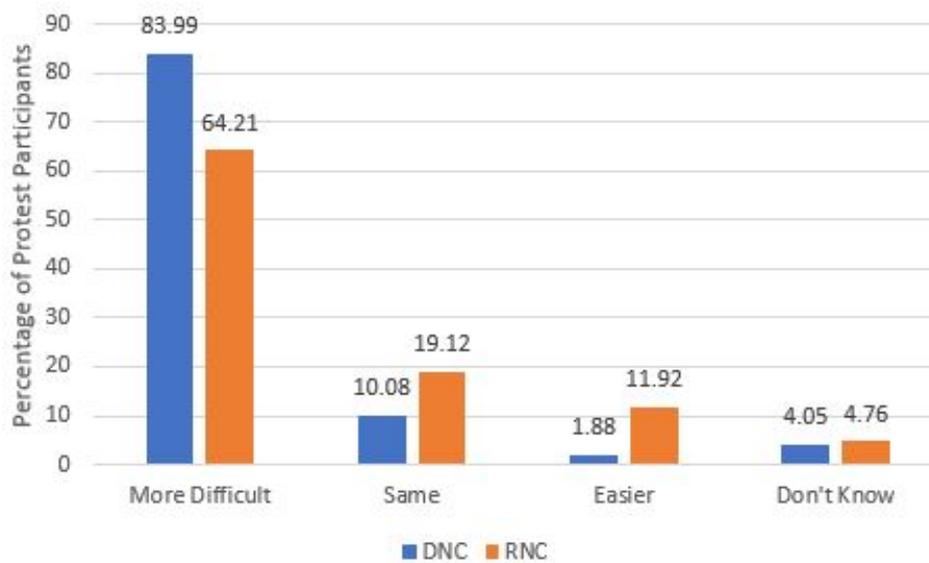


Figure 7.3: Participant Policy Positions on Guns

“DO YOU BELIEVE RACIAL INEQUALITY EXISTS IN AMERICA?” Survey respondents were “do you believe racial inequality exists in America?” Using survey weighting, the positions of the general protest population at each convention were approximated. 94.6% of protesters outside the DNC and 80.5% of protesters outside the RNC believe that racial inequality exists in the United States. As would be expected, participants who were independents or supported the Democratic party or a third party were more likely to believe that racial inequality exists.

8 CURRENT PAPERS USING SURVEY RESULTS

- “Three surprising facts about the protesters at the Republican National Convention” by San-Jan Sarah Liu, Patricia Posey, and Kevin Reuning. July 24, 2016. The Monkey Cage - The Washington Post. www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/07/24/three-surprising-facts-about-the-protesters-at-the-republican-national-convention/?utm_term=.281cfacff629
- “Who were the protesters at the Democratic National Convention this week” by San-Jan Sarah Liu, Patricia Posey, and Kevin Reuning. July 29, 2016. The Monkey Cage - The Washington Post. www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/07/29/who-were-the-protesters-at-the-democratic-national-convention-this-week/?utm_term=.a7e4e2fe569f
- “Outside the Convention: Protester Partisanship at the 2016 RNC and DNC” by Kevin Reuning and Lee Ann Banaszak. To be presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, September 2, 2017.
- “Outside the Convention: Protester Motivations at the 2016 RNC and DNC” by Kevin Reuning and Lee Ann Banaszak. To be presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, CA, August 13, 2017.
- “The Strategies of Protest: Action, Message, and Community” by Kevin Reuning and Lee Ann Banaszak. Working paper.

9 WANT MORE INFORMATION?

For further information or clarification regarding any of these results, please contact Dr. Lee Ann Banaszak at the Pennsylvania State University. Her contact information is as follows:

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