

Psychosocial Predictors of One's Support or Condemnation of Colin Kaepernick

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Background

- ❖ In 2016, Colin Kaepernick brought the fight for social justice to the forefront of the football field by kneeling in protest of racial inequality.
- ❖ 89% of Trump supporters stated they were against these protests, and 76% of 2016 Clinton voters voiced their support (Dann, 2018).
- ❖ One side of the media framed it as unpatriotic to kneel during the anthem or to protest a country's policies.
- ❖ The other side stated framed it as unpatriotic to not fight for change in one's country (Martin & Pchendry, 2015).
- ❖ Overall, studies have found two competing narratives of what patriotism is (Cho Suh & Montez de Oca, 2019).
- ❖ We included two forms of patriotism: one assessing pride in being an American, and one best defined as nationalism.

Purpose

To analyze whether there are factors that predict one's support of racial justice protests during sporting events beyond political orientation. Specifically, this study examined patriotism, system justification, empathy, and dichotomous thinking.

Data

Participants

- ❖ 400 undergraduate students at a university in California responded to an online survey measuring empathy, dichotomous thinking, system justification, and two forms of patriotism.
- ❖ Participants then indicated their current and 2016 level of support for Colin Kaepernick on a scale of 0-100.

Results

Support for Kaepernick was negatively correlated with...

- **Patriotism** ($r = -.400, p < .001$)
- **Beliefs in system justification** ($r = -.469, p < .001$)
- **Nationalism** ($r = -.173, p = .017$)



Support for Kaepernick was *not* significantly correlated with...

- **Empathy** ($r = .084, p = .263$)
- **Dichotomous thinking** ($r = .063, p = .372$)



Conclusions

Discussion

- ❖ Neither dichotomous thinking nor empathy were found to relate to support of Colin Kaepernick, which may insinuate that people believe themselves to be more empathetic than in actuality.
- ❖ Nationalism was much less of an indicator of support than American pride.
- ❖ The American pride form of patriotism accounted for a larger percentage of variability than political orientation.

Research Implications & Future Directions

- ❖ It may be that empathy does not extend to those across the political aisle.
- ❖ Future studies should look at support for conservative protests, and see how this relates to empathy and Kaepernick protests.
- ❖ Future work should also examine why those who support racial justice protests distance themselves from the term "American".
- ❖ It is possible that liberals and conservatives associate America with different attributes.
- ❖ Future work could examine if liberals and conservatives define patriotism differently.

Limitations

- A liberal university was sampled in an already liberal state (California). Political affiliation proportions were uneven.
- Self-report always runs a risk of participants inaccurately assessing their own attributes/opinions.