



Outside Agitators?

The Homegrown Roots of the Moral Monday Protests

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Moral Monday Protests

The Moral Mondays demonstrations began outside the North Carolina State Legislative Building on Halifax Mall on May 6th in response to the Republican majority's legislative agenda. Their agenda, which has quickly gained attention as one of the most radically conservative in the country¹, seeks, among other efforts, significant cuts to public education, reduced early voting, repeal of the Racial Justice Act, stringent Voter ID laws, repeal of public funding for judicial races, rejection of the federally funded extension of Medicaid coverage, dismantlement of the Clean Water Fund, opening of the state to hydraulic fracking, and relaxation of rules against legislators receiving gifts from lobbyists. Largely seen as enacting policies that are responsive to the requests and desires of lobbyists and the wealthy few at the expense of socio-economic minorities and seniors, the North Carolina Legislature has drawn the ire of North Carolina voters across various sectors.



Rev. William Barber

The North Carolina Chapter of the NAACP led attempts to communicate these concerns with Gov. Pat McCrory and legislative leadership in late April, but, in the words of Rev. William Barber, NC NAACP President, "Once they refused to meet and refused to stop their destructive campaign, we had no choice but to commit our constitutional responsibility to instruct our legislators by engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience."²



Gov. Pat McCrory

¹ http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-25/business/39518695_1_state-income-tax-north-carolina-state-legislature

² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/10/north-carolina-gop-moral-mondays>

The first demonstration drew 17 citizens—mostly clergy. By the 6th Moral Monday demonstration, over 1,400 people gathered on Halifax Mall, and over 80 were arrested. As the numbers of protestors grew, so did the accusations from the right. Republican Thom Goolsby wrote in the Chatham Journal on June 7th referring to the peaceful demonstrations as “Moron Monday.”³ On June 9th, Governor McCrory charged that the protests were fueled by special interests and outside agitators. “Outsiders are coming in, and they’re going to try to do to us what they did to Scott Walker in Wisconsin,” McCrory said according to an Associated Press report.⁴

Motivation

The research team, composed of eight social scientists from both the public and private sectors, used scientific survey methodology to answer the question of whether or not protestors were “outside agitators.” This research builds on previous efforts by Mark Binker and Amanda Lamb of WRAL-TV, who found that 98% of individuals arrested at Moral Monday protests were residents of North Carolina.⁵ Our goal was to develop a robust snapshot of the demographic makeup of Moral Monday protestors. We did this by collecting the zip code of residence and other demographic data from a sample of 316 protestors at the June 17, 2013 Moral Monday protest.

Findings

Utilizing a zone-segment sampling methodology, six data collectors dispersed throughout the June 17 Moral Monday crowd on Halifax Mall, conducting interviews with protestors. The researchers collected information about the protest participants’ age, gender, ethnicity, and place of residence. The researchers also asked if participants had previously attended a Moral Monday protest.

On whole, we found that the participants at the Moral Monday protest were overwhelmingly North Carolina residents; of the 316 interviews we completed, only 5 respondents reported an out-of-state zip code as their current primary residence. The

³ <http://www.chathamjournal.com/weekly/opinion/myopinion/moron-monday-shows-radical-left-just-does-not-get-it-130607.shtml>

⁴ <http://abclocal.go.com/wtvd/story?section=news/politics&id=9132553>

⁵ <http://www.wral.com/most-moral-monday-arrestees-from-north-carolina/12540006/>

Moral Monday protestors had an average age of 50.1 years, with 25% of protestors age 36 or younger. Females (60%) were represented in greater numbers than males (40%). Respondent ethnicity was primarily Caucasian (79.87%) with African-Americans (16.93%) comprising the second most populous group.

Where are the protestors from?

To understand where Moral Monday protestors were from, survey respondents were asked to provide the zip code of their current place of residence. Of the 316 individuals, 311 zip codes were from North Carolina – indicating that approximately 98.4% of the Moral Monday protestors currently reside in North Carolina.

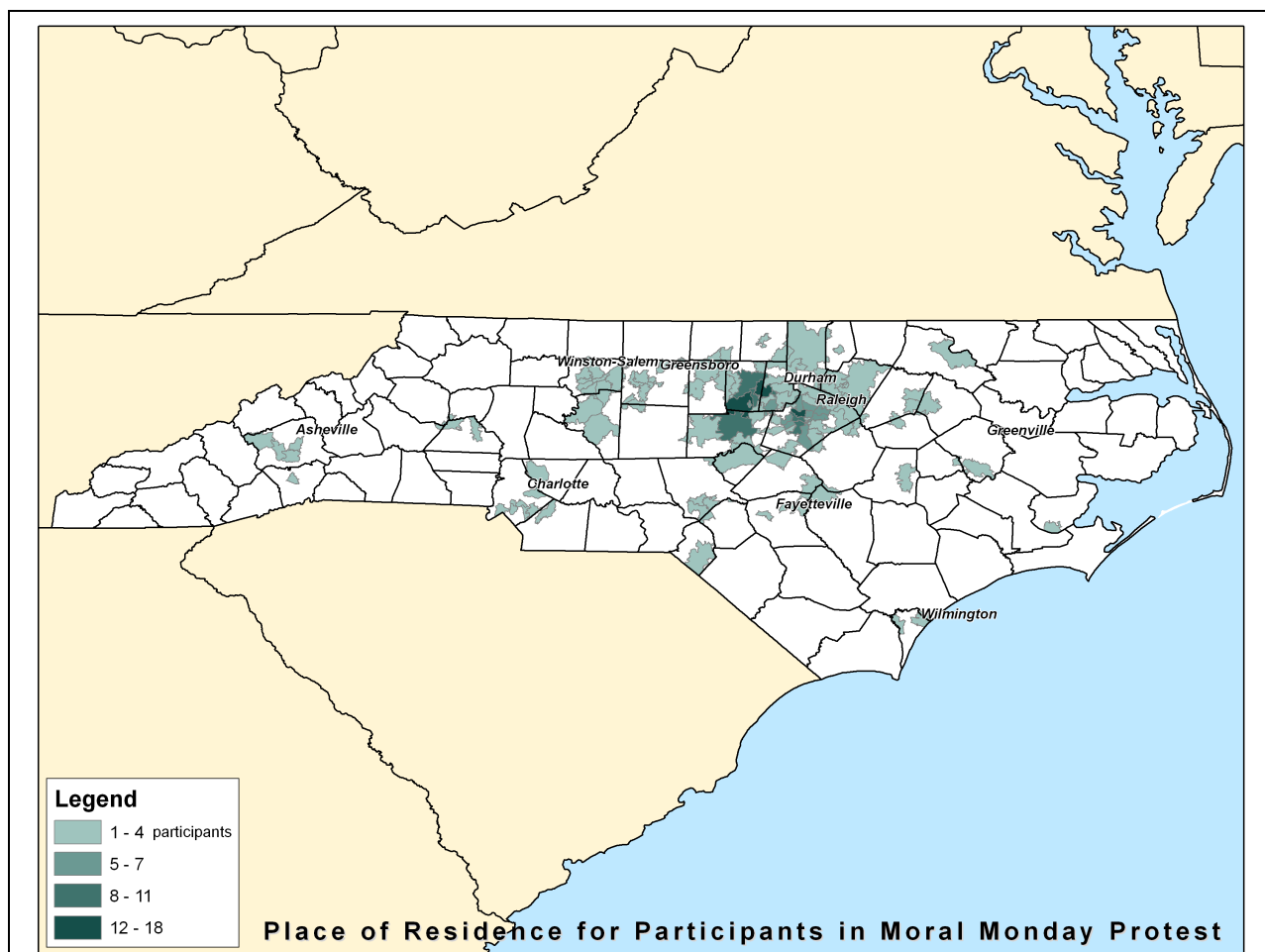


Figure 1: Visualization of the Place of Residence for Participants in the June 17, 2013 Moral Monday Protest. Zip codes with larger protest participation are represented by darker gradients.

We then analyzed the zip codes using ArcMap software, plotting where Moral Monday protestors currently reside. We found that protestors are primarily from the Raleigh-Durham metro area (Figure 1), with additional representation from Charlotte, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro/Burlington, Fayetteville, Wilmington, and numerous rural areas. The five out-of-state zip codes were from Texas, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

Demographics of the Participants

To understand the demographics of the protestors, we collected basic information on the protestors' age, gender, and ethnic backgrounds. We also asked the protestors about any prior attendance at Moral Monday protests, finding that 50% of those surveyed had previously attended a Moral Monday protest. The findings are reported in Tables 1 and 2, and have an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.56 percentage points.

Participant Age

We found that the average age of a Moral Monday protestor was 50.1 years old (SD 17.11 years, median 53 years). Twenty-five percent of protestors were age 36 or younger, and 25 percent of protestors were age 64 or older.

When comparing first time protestors to repeat protestors, we found that repeat protestors had an average age of 53.7 years. First time protestors were younger, with an average age of 46.5 years.

Participant Gender

We found that 60.5% of Moral Monday protestors were female, 39.5% male. When comparing new vs. repeat participation, we found that both groups had a 60% female representation. More women than men were coming for the first time just as more women than men had previously attended.

	Overall Sample	New Protestor	Repeat Protestor
Age	50.1 years	46.5 years	53.7 years
Gender	60.5% Female	60.63% Female	60% Female

Table 1: Average Age and Observed Gender of protestors, broken out by new vs. repeat protestor.

Participant Ethnicity

Ethnicity of Moral Monday protestors is reported in Table 2. Estimates have a margin of error of +/- 4.5 and are compared to 2011 American Community Survey Estimates.

	Moral Monday	2011 ACS Estimate
Caucasian	79.87%	72.1%
African-American	16.93%	22%
Hispanic	1.92%	8.6%
Native American	0%	1.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.28%	2.3%

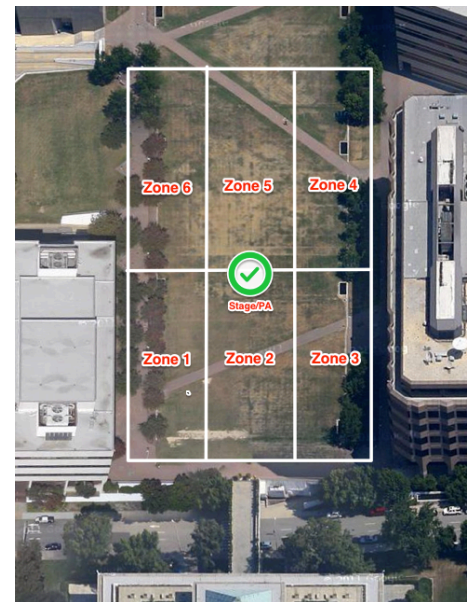
Table 2: Ethnicity of Moral Monday protestors, compared to 2011 ACS Estimates.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research data indicates that the Moral Monday movement is indeed a home-grown movement. In addition to 98.4% of June 17th Moral Monday protestors residing in North Carolina, the fact that 50% were attending their first Moral Monday protest suggests that the movement is continuing to attract new participants. The distribution of protestor residency across North Carolina further indicates that the movement, although initiated in and still concentrated in the Triangle, has support that extends across rural and urban areas of the state.

Additional Methodological Detail

Once the crowd gathered around the speakers' platform in the middle of the Mall, the survey researchers took positions in six quadrants radiating out from the stage. Each covered their area attempting to follow an imaginary pathway from the stage to the outer fringes of the crowd with a goal of collecting 50 surveys per interviewer along the way. This type of sampling called "Stationary-Crowd Zone-Segment" sampling was used on the theory that crowd participants tend to group themselves around the stage according to their passion and commitment with those who are most committed clustering close to the stage while those who are mainly observing congregating near the outskirts.⁶ The method ensures sampling across these segments. We also aimed to approximate the racial/ethnic and gender



To conduct the research, survey researchers dispersed evenly through six zones in Halifax Plaza

⁶ For more detail, please see Seidler, J., Meyer, K., & Mac Gillivray, L. (1976). Collecting data on crowds and rallies: a new method of stationary sampling. *Social Forces*, 55(2), 507-519.

differences in the crowd as a whole. Each person interviewed was asked for the zip code of his or her place of residence, age, and whether the Moral Monday protest was the first he or she had attended. The researcher noted race/ethnicity and gender. The data were stored online, tallied, and plotting using Stata 12 and ArcMap software. Margin of error was calculated at +/- 4.56 percentage points (at $p=0.95$) based on an estimated participation of 1000 individuals (based on media reports and averaging of prior protest size).

Research Team

This research was conducted by EPS Research, directed by Dr. Fred Stutzman. For more information about EPS research, please visit <http://eps-research.com> or contact Dr. Stutzman at contact@eps-research.com. The contributors to this research project follow.

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